



MERCY OCEANS' HIDDEN TREASURES

TEACHINGS OF
SULTANUL AWLIYA

MAWLANA SHAYKH 'ABDULLAH AL-FA'IZ
AD-DAGHESTANI AN-NAQSHBANDI

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Mercy Oceans'

HIDDEN TREASURES

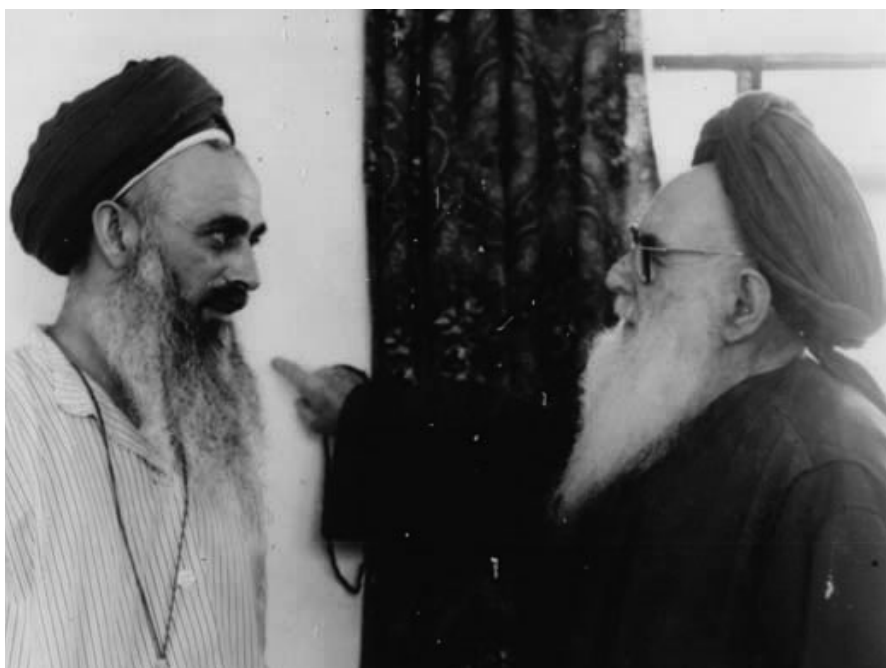
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The Teachings of
Mawlana Shaykh
‘Abdullah al-Fa’iz ad-Daghestani
An-Naqshbandi

As expounded upon by our Master
Mawlana Shaykh
Muhammad Nazim ‘Adil al-Haqqani
An-Naqshbandi
May Allah Sanctify Their Blessed Souls



Edited by Ibrahim Shukrullah



Our Masters

Shaykh 'Abdullah al-Fa'iz ad-Daghestani (right)

Shaykh Nazim al-Haqqani (left)

May Allah Sanctify Their Blessed Souls



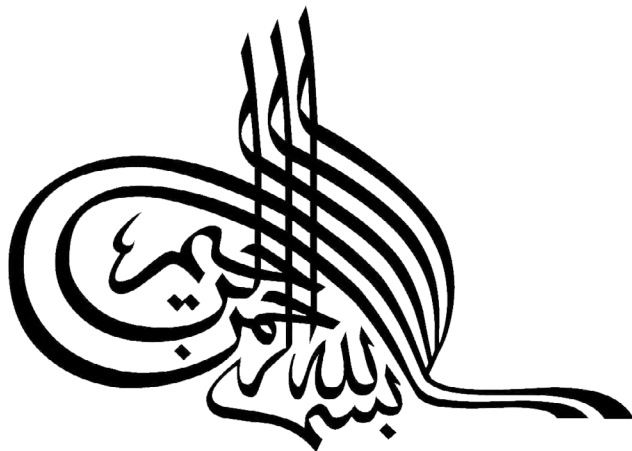


Our Master

Shaykh Muhammad 'Adil ar-Rabbani
41st Grandshaykh of the Naqshbandi Tariqat

May Allah Sanctify His Secret





Mercy Oceans' Hidden Treasures

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of
Thyra Zero Quensel

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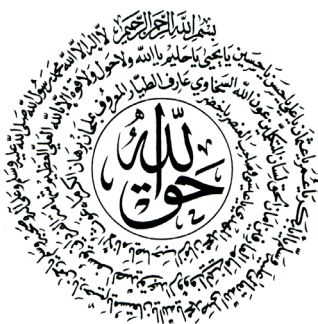


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INTRODUCTION

Oh my brothers, this
book is a mine into which
you may dig, and from
which you may take jewels
and precious metals. Miners
are digging up rocks,
cutting them open and
extracting precious metals.
My English is like rocks, but
through my words you may
find the precious metals you
need — so don't look at my
English but take from it
those treasures.

Shaykh Nazim 'Adil Al-Qubrusi

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH
THE ALL BENEFICENT, THE ALL MERCIFUL

PART ONE

WINTER LECTURES
DAMASCUS 1401 H. (1981 C.E.)

“AND WE TAUGHT HIM KNOWLEDGE FROM OUR DIVINE PRESENCE”

We are reading from my Grandshaykh’s lectures. Grandshaykh was an unlettered man, but Allah Almighty teaches some people because they put everything out of their hearts excepting their Lord, and they choose their Lord over everything — until their Lord loves them, and when He loves His servant He gives him treasures from His knowledge. No one can learn this knowledge through books, this knowledge which is called “Ilm-ul-ladunni”, or knowledge directly from His Divine Presence, as the Qur’an declares:

“And We taught him knowledge from Our Divine Presence.”

(Surat al Kahf, Ayat 65)

Outward religious knowledge is easy to obtain, even non-Muslims can know it, but this knowledge can’t be gained except through purifying the heart of all created things, of all that exists besides Him Almighty.

One of those chosen people was our Grandshaykh ‘Abdullah Ad-Daghestani, Sultan al-Awliya. He was telling us from his knowledge-treasures that every verse of Qur’an and Hadith of the Prophet, Peace be Upon Him, contains every knowledge concerning everyone living, already passed away, or yet to be born in future generations; therefore, a person if thinking about or pondering over a verse of Qur’an or a Hadith, he may attain the ability of clear distinction, and so he will find his way to his Lord with ease. If anyone takes up his journey with a holy verse or Hadith, his path will become clear within himself, as Allah says about His Prophet that he is calling people to a clear, bright, clean

and safe way. Therefore, it is important for everyone to search for a verse or a Hadith and ponder it so that it will become clear to him and then, so many beneficial ways and Divine Signs will appear to him.

Grandshaykh said that each person will derive benefit from verses and Hadiths according to his faith-power. The more faith-power he reaches, the more benefit he may derive; he may dive deeper and deeper into those meaning oceans contained therein. Grandshaykh said that Awliya may perceive at least twenty-four thousand meanings from one verse's oceans of meanings. You can't see anything in a drop of water, but when you are looking with a microscope you may see millions of living bacteria coming and going every which way. Therefore, there cannot be any valid objection to this saying, and anyone who claims that there is only one meaning for an ayat is indeed a foolish person.

If anyone is objecting, we may say to him, "Oh my brother, look — Allah sent to Muhammad only one book. Now just look at the Islamic World and you will find huge libraries overflowing with books, and the main source for all these books is the Holy Qur'an; millions of books on the whole range of Islamic topics (and very precious books at that) — where then, do all these books come from?" They are springing from the living source of the Holy Qur'an; they didn't exist, nor could they have ever existed before the Qur'an was revealed. It is then but a small thing to say that a Wali can know at least of twenty-four thousand meanings for a verse. You can find libraries growing every day. Some Islamic authors wrote several hundred volumes on the meanings of Qur'an, and now even Europeans are joining the Muslims in writing about its meanings. This generation may write two or three books on every book which is presently in the library just for their clarification and explanation. And so, you may know that the Knowledge of Qur'an is

constantly expanding.

If such is the case for scholarly knowledge of the Qur'an, then what about the knowledge of such people whose teacher is Allah Himself? Allah's Knowledge is limitless, and for all He bestows upon His servants from it, still it will never decrease. We are never going to be satisfied with our level of learning, as mankind has a boundless yearning for knowledge. Therefore, Islam is best and Islam is highest — giving mankind as much knowledge as it could wish for, and explaining the reality of all existence. There is a proverb: Man will never be satisfied with regard to two desires — money and knowledge: whosoever seeks money will never say "enough," and likewise he who seeks knowledge will never say "enough." This saying points out the two sides of man's personality: the ego (Nafs) asking for endless pleasures in this life and the soul asking for endless heavenly knowledge.

* * *

THE UNFATHOMABLE POWER IN THE AYATS OF QUR'AN

I am asking our Grandshaykh to reach to us with his spiritual powers so that we may give explanations of his teachings, and also, I am asking for spiritual powers for those who will listen to his words.

Grandshaykh was saying that if a person can arrange and direct his actions according to a Qur'anic verse and do so with full belief, he can receive from it every knowledge of which he may be in need throughout his life. Also, he says in regard to the meaning of 'Ayat' or verse of the Qur'an, that to call it a 'verse' is not sufficient, for an ayat is in reality much, much more than

explaining something through a verse; as I understand from Grandshaykh, 'ayat' belongs to Allah Almighty and is a 'Sign of Allah', sign of His endless Power and Knowledge. Ayat reaches to the highest point and is in all cases victorious, so that no matter what comes upon one from the Sons of Adam, one ayat will be enough to vanquish it all and to make one victorious. That is ayat: it has such a power that it outweighs the power of all mankind put together.

For what reason has ayat been so named? — Because Allah Almighty challenged all of the Arabs and all mankind to put forward one verse alike unto a Quranic ayat; to all come together — poets, learned men, clever people — and see if they were able to, but they failed — and they had to fail — as it is impossible to meet the challenge. Why? — Because an ayat contains the word of Allah, quite distinct from the word of men. The Prophet recited Qur'an as it was read to him, and at other times he spoke from himself (Hadith), but if you compare the two you can tell the difference immediately, just as one may easily distinguish between rubies and normal stones; such is the difference between the two — one the word of mortal man and the other the word of the Almighty and Eternal Lord.

Our Grandshaykh was saying that if a man can keep and totally practice one ayat, that he himself will become an Ayat from among the ayats or signs of Allah, and will be victorious over all. We are not speaking about such people who name themselves 'ayatullah'; if a person is a true ayatullah then power is coming through him so that he has no need to use guns, rockets and soldiers. Even one of his holy breaths is adequate to protect himself and his whole nation from evil.

* * *

(A question was asked): “Is it true what I was told, that it took Abu Bakr As-Siddiq ten years to completely absorb and incorporate Surat al-Fatiha (The Opening Chapter of the Qur’an)?”

This is such a chapter (Surah) that if it even took Abu Bakr ten years to incorporate it, then we cannot reach it even in ten-thousand years. The important point is that Abu Bakr attained to the understanding of this surah, and that this surah contains within it all of the Holy Qur’an. The Fatiha stands for the whole Qur’an but the whole rest of the Qur’an cannot stand in the place of the Fatiha. If you read Qur’an seven times from beginning to end without reading the Fatiha it will not be equal to reading the Fatiha just once — that is why we read the Fatiha in every rakat of the prayer. I once heard from my Grandshaykh that Sayyidina ‘Ali said: “Oh people, I can sit here and tell you so many meanings of Fatiha that if you wrote them down, they would fill enough volumes to overburden one-hundred camels, and still it would not be enough to express the meanings of al-Fatiha.”

* * *

WHO LIKES TO EAT THE FLESH OF HIS DEAD BROTHER?

My Grandshaykh was speaking on a point of utmost importance for everyone — about a very terrible and dangerous characteristic of egos which is the main source of every trouble for mankind, the fountain of evil and the famous ‘arm of devils’ for turning people into each other’s enemies and destroying good relations between people in general. We are very proud of our religion of Islam for the fact that it prohibited this worst characteristic of the ego. This characteristic is backbiting, and it destroys

everything — thus it is strongly prohibited by Allah. My Grandshaykh says that we must be very careful on this point. Our faith (Iman) will never grow if we cannot desist from backbiting. Every time we backbite we do to our Iman what pouring acid on the roots of a young tree does to that tree. It is a very terrible action, and Grandshaykh pointed to the following verse (Ayat) of Qur'an in order to show Just how terrible:

“O ye who believe! Shun much suspicion; for lo! some suspicion is a sin. And spy not, neither backbite on another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You abhor that (so abhor the other)! And keep your duty to Allah. Lo! Allah is Relenting, Merciful.”

(Surat al-Hujrat, Ayat 12)

Allah gave this ayat to the sons of Adam in order that they should hate that characteristic and be disgusted by it: you, when you backbite, are the same as someone who eats his brother's cadaver.

We must clearly define backbiting so that we can distinguish it and seek to avoid it: if you are plagued with a characteristic which you detest in yourself and are trying to hide, and then someone comes along, spots it and makes it public with the intention of degrading and debasing you in the eyes of people — then he is backbiting. You are trying to hide your faults, and he comes along and spreads word of them around so that people's hearts may turn away from you.

On the other hand there are some people who are committing every badness and are proud of their doings, not caring what people think of them, not hiding, nor feeling any shame for their sins; if you are cautioning someone so that he may not fall victim of such a devil,

then this is certainly not backbiting but, quite to the contrary, a duty. You must differentiate between the two: One person is, so to speak, dragged to evil because his ego pulls him there and he is too weak to resist, but he feels shame; the other is a conscienceless devil, and you must describe his characteristics exactly and warn. Allah Almighty Himself describes Abu Lahab, Nimrod, Abu Jahl, Pharaoh and Haman in the Holy Qur'an for this reason.

Another very delicate matter is that of giving advice (Nasihah). We must not tell people about their faults directly, but we must be tactful and indirect in our approach. In Turkish we use the example of the mother-in-law who wanted to correct an objectionable trait in her daughter-in-law, but in order to avoid offending her she reprimanded her own daughter in the presence of the daughter-in-law for just that very fault which she wished to correct in her. In this manner the daughter-in-law understood without taking offense. It is very important to use this sort of tactic, especially in our times when people's feelings are more fragile than china teacups — you must be very careful.

In general, one must not tell anyone anything directly. When you see a no-good characteristic in someone you may say, "Oh my brother, sometimes I have such-and-such a problem with my ego, what shall I do about it?" Perhaps he will say, "Oh, I also have that problem." This is real guidance.

* * *

ABOUT BACKBITING: A STORY FROM THE LIFE OF THE PROPHET

Allah Almighty is teaching us so many lessons so

that we may become suitable for His Divine Presence. Now we shall speak about our Prophet's miracles. Every Prophet brought miracles and indeed must bring miracles, so that people can understand that he is an extraordinary person with a personality distinct from ours.

Our Prophet said: "Whoso sees me (and the miracles that I have brought) and believes in me, that is a grant from Allah Almighty to His servant; but I am not surprised that those who see me should believe; what I am astonished by are that those who come after our generation are believing in me just from reading about me in history books. Greatest happiness (Tooba) for those who have seen me and believe in me, but seven times greater happiness for those who did not meet me but are believing through having heard of me."

One day the Holy Prophet was sitting with his companions when two men entered holding their stomachs in pain, saying, "Oh Rasulallah, we have intense pain in our stomachs — please treat us with your medicine." The Prophet answered, "You must have eaten something which caused you this, you must have eaten some raw meat." "Oh Prophet, we haven't eaten any meat in fifteen days, what to speak of raw meat." "No, you must have eaten raw meat I tell you." Again they denied it, so he instructed them to induce vomiting, and each of them vomited out large chunks of green, rotten, raw meat. At this the two men were astonished on account of two things: Firstly, because they never had eaten any such thing, nor would they have dreamed of doing so, yet they regurgitated it from their very own bellies; and secondly, because the pain they had been suffering disappeared immediately. "Oh Rasulallah, we swear to you that we never ate this." To this the Prophet replied: "Oh people, did you not just pass by the house of a certain person and backbite about him? Did not Allah

say that whosoever backbites eats the raw meat of his brother's cadaver? Allah speaks only the truth, and this is proof of it."

When you are backbiting you destroy your own faith and that of your victim as well, because when one speaks badly about another, a bad current reaches to that person, and he wears that offense as if it were a heavy burden around his neck. You destroy your faith and his faith, and bring darkness and madness upon him. For this reason it is strongly forbidden in Islam to defame one another.

On the other hand, if you are speaking good things about a person, a good current reaches out to him and sheds light on his soul; therefore, it has been ordered to make supplication (Du'a) for people in their absence. The Prophet says that when a believer makes a du'a for an absent brother, that good wish goes out to him and makes him lighter, stronger and more joyful; also Allah Almighty sends an Angel to that suppliant with the following good tidings: "As much as you are asking for that brother of light, strength and happiness, that much Allah is giving to you also." In this way both parties' profit, and similarly, in the case of backbiting, both sides will suffer, as darkness will descend on your heart as well as his. If not for backbiting, relationships would be stronger, and as much as we are connected with each other the more Allah Almighty is pleased with us and extends to us His Divine Protection.

Our Grandshaykh was furthermore explaining that if a person backbites it means that he is burdening the victim with a heavy load so that it becomes difficult for him to bring himself to perform acts of worship. Allah Almighty has stated that He created man only to worship Him, and if you are backbiting you are cutting that person from worship, and thus killing him.

In this time the majority of people cannot perform the acts of worship asked of them; they are very heavy and lackadaisical in this respect but so quick and agile in serving the Devil and following his way. Backbiting is one of the biggest underlying reasons why people are delaying in performing their worship.

The Prophet says that Allah is the Judge of Judges and that no one can judge anyone as Allah does. If one is backbiting, he is making himself into a judge with no authority from the Judge of Judges: “So-and-so is a no-good person.” Know that you are not the judge of your Lord’s servants; He created them and He judges them as He wills! Whoso ignores this point is making himself out to be a partner to Allah (Shirk), and this is one of the greatest sins — as Allah never accepts that partners be ascribed to Him.

Who seeks a partner? He who hasn’t enough power seeks a partner, but Allah Almighty has Endless Power and All-Penetrating Will — for what does He need to seek a partner? No partner for Him and no son. A man may be in need of a son to succeed him, but Allah has no need for a successor. His is Eternal Existence knowing no boundaries of time. Therefore, everyone must be very careful. I think this is enough to show us what a terrible thing backbiting is.

* * *

SOME SECRETS OF HIS DIVINE REALM

I am always asking Divine Help from my Lord so that I may clearly explain these important matters. Perhaps hundreds or thousands of people will listen to these words, and I am asking my Lord to grant them understanding and benefit, so that they may tread a

straight path and escape from the traps of devils. This is a very high ideal, and everyone must have this ideal and purpose! We must try to help everyone, not only for the sake of our own salvation, but for that of all mankind. Allah Almighty is calling us to this way.

We are speaking about the holy verses (Ayat) of our Creator, Allah Almighty. According to our Grandshaykh's explanation, every verse is an endless independent ocean of meaning; you can take all things from that ocean. Even if we would absorb from the ocean of one ayat throughout all eternity, it would never be exhausted; they remain the same limitless oceans eternally.

Perhaps someone may ask, "For what did Allah create these eternal oceans?" We must know that Allah Almighty is never in need of anything, and therefore is creating all those oceans solely for the sake of His servants. The main attribute of Allah Almighty is His being beyond need of anyone; but while He is never in need of anything, His creatures' main attribute is to be in need at every moment. The creature can never be above need of his Creator; if the Divine Help which keeps everything in existence was to be pulled out for even a second from the smallest atomic particle, then that piece would cease to exist.

Now, you must know that Allah Almighty is the Creator, and He is forever creating. No one can define a limit or a beginning for His creation. He was creating from pre-eternity and will create forever. Eternity means 'outside of time'; Allah is the Creator, and He brought the Sons of Adam into time — but they originated outside of time. They are like a gigantic river — every creature coming from timelessness, from a world where time has no meaning, then entering into time and ultimately returning to eternity from whence he came. On both

ends of the river's journey we find eternity.

We are all in need of those endless meaning oceans, and every creature is swimming in them, taking from his Lord's favours. The divine reason for His verses being such endless oceans is that we may say, "Our Lord has limitless sovereignty over His Realm." For such a realm there must be an infinity of servants, creatures, worshippers, angels and kingdoms. No one can fully understand his Lord; one may know a little regarding his Lord, but it is quite impossible to know all. He is the absolute King over His Kingdom, and there is no partner unto Him. When His servants know this they will say, "Oh my Lord, we are powerless." When they are thus recognizing and admitting their powerlessness, He gives them from His Divine Power and dresses them with it, which enables them to dive into those oceans and derive more and more benefit from Divine Wisdom and Knowledge.

Our Grandshaykh was saying that each Prophet and Saint has a special position and rank particular to him and unlike that of another. In accordance with their respective positions, they are taking Divine Wisdom and Knowledge from that ocean. What are they doing with this Knowledge and Wisdom? The more they take of it the more they are improving through Divine Lights, thus approaching their Lord's Divine Presence where they experience boundless pleasure in witnessing more beauty oceans from His Divine Face. Therefore, they have become obsessed with their Lord. If, for example, a thirsty person drinks salty water, he will demand more and more in a vain attempt to quench his thirst, and eventually he will die. In the case of Prophets and Saints, they also ask to drink more and more of their Lord's beauty oceans; but contrary to the drinker of salt water, they become endlessly more satisfied as they drink and grow ever more pleased with their Lord's Presence, so

that they pursue it tirelessly and will sacrifice all things for the sake of this Divine Favour.

The Prophets and Saints who sacrifice everything in this way are most wise and discerning, but those people who neglect that excellent and most valuable life, turning instead to this dirty life, are the most foolish of people; they abandon eternal life in exchange for a bit of fading enjoyment.

* * *

**“ASK MORE OF ME AND I WILL
BESTOW ON YOU MORE THAN YOU
CAN IMAGINE OF THIS BOUNDLESS
OCEAN”**

Everyone and everything is powerless in relation to Allah Almighty, and no one has any power without his Lord's giving it to him. If the Lord Almighty gives power to servants, they may become powerful, but their original state is one of total powerlessness. If a servant declares his powerlessness in front of his Lord, it is an honour for that servant, and as a result of his humility his Lord will grant him power and support in every situation. The Prophet, Peace be Upon Him, is the first to declare his powerlessness in the Divine Presence; therefore, Allah Almighty has granted him more power than He ever gave to anyone. This is a very good lesson for mankind: if we are seeking more Divine Support and spiritual power, we should first admit our own powerlessness.

Now, Grandshaykh is explaining more upon this point: Allah Almighty gives of His Power to His beloved servants so that they may swim in those

oceans of knowledge and wisdom. What they take, they take eternally; they ask endlessly and are endlessly bestowed upon by their Lord. Neither servant nor Lord is ever going to say ‘enough’; rather, the Lord will say, “My servant, ask for as much as you can because I am always giving more and more. Ask ten and I will give a hundred, ask a hundred and I will give a thousand, etc.; if you don’t ask, I shall become angry with you.”

It is one of Allah Almighty’s attributes that He always wants to give more to His servants — if you can recognize this attribute, it will give you satisfaction. If Allah were to say, “That is enough, don’t ask more,” it would mean that He doesn’t have any more to give to His servants, and if it were so, the hearts of mankind would explode. But Allah Almighty says, “Oh My servants, ask more and more, and I will bestow more than you can possibly imagine.” We must thank Allah for this and be happy that we have such a Creator, such a Lord.

Our Grandshaykh says that although you may take more and more from Allah’s wisdom and knowledge oceans, don’t think that you can take all, for in reality you can take but one drop, not a bit more. Perhaps that drop may even be a huge drop, but it is still only a drop, and no matter how large it is, it still has bounds, whereas His ocean knows no boundaries. In this is real pleasure for us: Everything that Allah Almighty is giving us grows within bounds. If we could go beyond the realm of boundaries, we would become partners to Allah, and that is an impossibility.

Now my Grandshaykh was saying that there are two kinds of knowledge. One kind belongs only to the Almighty Himself, and the other kind Allah Almighty gives to His servants. We are speaking about that second kind only, for the first kind, the knowledge belonging to His Essence (Dhat), is impossible to behold, even

for the Angels, Prophets and Saints — off limits. The endless oceans which He bestows upon His servants are nothing compared to His Essential Knowledge, which He is keeping to Himself.

Look at this point also: When Allah Almighty called His Prophet on the Night of the Ascension (Laylatul-mi'raj) and spoke to him without intermediary, He imparted unto Muhammad three types, or areas of knowledge. One part of that knowledge He ordered the Prophet to keep with himself only: "No one can know that; it is private between Me and you." The second part He allowed the Prophet to share with a selected elite (Khawas) of the Nation (Ummah), and the third part He ordered to be opened to everyone. The accounts we read in books about the mi'raj are from the third part of these knowledges, and further knowledge of it is given to people according to their individual ranks. The palm tree has a knowledge that it may produce dates, the orange tree has a different knowledge, as it learned from its Lord to make oranges. Apple trees produce apples, olive trees olives, and just so everything in the universe is producing according to its rank and position.

You have also been taught a knowledge from your Lord, but now in our position it is covered. You are yet like a seed which hasn't even been planted. You must plant yourself in seclusion (Khalwa). As the seed must be covered by earth, so you must be covered from this world — then you can know yourself. When a seed is in the ground for ten days, it will sprout, but our seed has not yet been planted and thus we cannot yet see whether we are orange trees or olive trees. This is the reason why the Prophet relates from Allah Almighty: "As long as you don't know yourself you can't know your Lord."

Bees learn to make honey, snakes learn to bite you,

and mules learn to kick you in the head.

* * *

POSITION OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD ON THE LAST DAY

The Last of the Prophets, Sayyidina Muhammad, Peace be Upon Him, is the most humble person of all mankind; no one can attain to his humbleness in the Divine Presence. Humility is the most beloved attribute of mankind in the eyes of Allah Almighty. To whatever extent we can be humble, just so much is our Lord raising us higher, as much as a person is proud in front of his Lord, that much his Lord will debase him.

Allah Almighty raised His Beloved Muhammad to the highest ranks in the Divine Presence and entrusted him with the distribution of ranks to all mankind according to their need. The ranks of the various Prophets and Saints have been divided up and bestowed by Muhammad, and also, for believers in general, their ranks of faith (Iman) have been given by him. Allah Almighty has deputed the Prophet Muhammad to judge every creature, but he is never judging beyond that authority — that authority may extend to every creature, but Allah Almighty is the Judge of Judges, and He holds in His Hand judgement for all creatures including Muhammad.

Grandshaykh was saying that Allah Almighty may open up to His Prophet the reality of being judge for all creatures on the Last Day. He will give to him authority to be judge for all people gathering on the Last Day in the Divine Presence. On that day, the Prophet's authority for judgement will appear. To know this is enough to know the honour belonging to our Prophet, who said in a Hadith: "On that day Adam and all the Prophets will

be under my flag. I am not saying this from pride, but only to inform you so you may believe in what my Lord is giving me on the Last Day; on that day all Prophets will be under my flag by the order of Allah Almighty, and by His command I am informing you so that you may know everyone's rank in the Divine Presence."

When Adam's soul was first blown into him, he looked up to the throne of Allah; later, when he sinned in Paradise and Allah Almighty sent him to Earth, he asked his Lord, "Oh my Lord, for the sake of Muhammad, forgive me." Allah Almighty asked him, "Oh Adam, how did you know Muhammad when yet he is not created?" "Oh my Lord, when my soul entered my body and I first opened my eyes, I looked to Your throne, where I saw written, "There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is His Messenger" (La ilaha illallah. Muhammadun Rasulallah), and so I know that he must be the most beloved person to You Almighty and the most honourable of creatures that his name may be thus written alongside Yours." Allah Almighty answered Adam, "Yes, you are right, he is My beloved, and is so respectable in My sight that I created the whole Universe for his sake; if you ask Me for forgiveness for his sake, I shall forgive you and shall be merciful with your sons as well."

Allah Almighty will give authority to Muhammad on the Last Day. On that day Allah will judge everyone, and when He is finished with His judgement He will call Muhammad to the most praised station (Maqam-ul-Mahmud), which no one else can reach. Allah Almighty shall say, "Ask, and whatever you want shall be granted to you, for these people are now subject to your judgement." This is the meaning of the Quranic saying that Muhammad was not sent but as a mercy to the worlds.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF ALIGNING OUR WILL WITH THE WILL OF THE LORD

My Grandshaykh was speaking on a very important point concerning Satan: For what reason was he thrown out of the Divine Presence? Grandshaykh said that Satan was a complete servant of his Lord, worshipping and respecting Him without any disobedience for over two thousand years; but one time, only one time, he used his will against the Will of his Lord. Putting his will above his Lord's was not and could never be a correct action and was the sole reason for his banishment. When Allah created Adam, His Will was that everyone prostrate themselves in front of him as a sign of respect, and thus, He commanded all to do so. Everyone obeyed except Satan, who said, "No." The meaning of this was, "My will is above your will, I am not obeying your order." That refusal to submit made him fall into the darkness of banishment, and that is the beginning and the fountain of sins.

Anyone of the Sons of Adam, says our Grandshaykh, who puts his will above the Will of Allah or that of the Prophet is secretly ascribing partners unto Allah (Shirk Khafi); it is not open, but hidden and thus very dangerous and a cause of deep trouble. Particularly in our time, everyone is catching and holding firmly to his own will, demanding that it prevail over all else. You may find only a very few people who will be in agreement with your will — the majority are holding firmly to their own. So how shall they agree with the Lord's Will or the Prophet's will if they cannot even bend to accept each other's? This is the fountain of sins; this is why all Tariqats are teaching people how they may abandon their wills in front of a person: you may say, "This is my Shaykh — I left my will for his will so that it may be a first step towards my learning to be an obedient

servant of Allah and of His Prophet, otherwise I can't even begin."

Now Satan and his armies are fighting against Shaykhs and Tariqats because Tariqats are teaching people how to leave their wills in front of Allah and His Prophet. Tariqats are educators — when I am saying that he is my Shaykh in love of Allah Almighty and His Prophet, then I love him not for this world, but truly for Allah and His Prophet.

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We are speaking on the will of servants — an extremely important matter affecting our lives and our improvement in the Divine Presence. To use our willpower as we should means to make it accord with our Lord's desires — if we can bring ourselves to do that, we will be acceptable in the Divine Presence; if not, it means unhappiness for us, defeat and darkness — all of which descended upon Satan because he could not bring himself to do what his Lord desired of him — to bow down to Adam. Because of this, all the devotions and acts of worship he performed for two thousand years were rendered useless, and he was banished.

Grandshaykh was stressing the importance of this point, as everything in every religion and faith is based upon it. If you can do your Lord's Will you may improve to the ranks of Prophets and Saints; you may approach the Divine Presence and find acceptance there; otherwise, you are secretly ascribing partners unto Allah, and you become stuck on this Earth like a plane that is tied down and can't take off. Whoever pays no attention to these subtle points is in danger of going the way of Satan. This is the common base of all religions, because Allah Almighty has said through all of His Holy Prophets: "Oh My people, if you claim that you are servants, then

put your desires in line with Mine, otherwise you are not servants.” Allah Almighty said to the Children of Israel through the Prophet Jesus: “Testify that Jesus Christ is My Prophet unto you.” They didn’t like that, and so they fell. Allah said to them: “I am not in need of your worshipping, all I want from you is that you accord with My desires.” Similarly, Allah said through His Prophet Muhammad: “Oh Christians, come and agree with Muhammad.” They answered “No, we only like Jesus Christ, that is enough for us.” He Almighty replied: “Your worshipping is unacceptable until your desires are alike unto Mine.”

Everyone wishes that his own desires be fulfilled — true or not? We must either serve as we like or as He likes. We must accept our Lord’s Word about Jesus Christ, and the same is true for Moses and the other Prophets. Now Muslims are also running after so many desires and fleeing from the way of Muhammad, saying, “We like this and that.” As a result, their worship comes to naught. If you can understand this point, it will suffice you, as it is the first and most important lesson we can learn from the actions of Satan — are you not afraid that you will be like him?

The Prophet’s companions learned to obey the Lord through obeying His Prophet. They said: “Oh our Prophet, we have ransomed our mothers and fathers for you.” They said this to him sincerely and with love; in this way they came to obey Allah through obeying Muhammad. Therefore, Allah ordered people to follow the inheritors of the Prophet and to hold to them as the companions (Sahaba) held to the Prophet, so that through them we may learn to obey the Lord. If this discipline of following those who are truly on the Prophet’s way was not in Islam, there would be no more Islam. Islam is coming with discipline, strong discipline: no more are the people to go like this or like that, but to follow in the

way of the Prophet. This is the meaning of the discipline of Islam. We must accept this or else we are cheating ourselves; we must keep discipline, as Allah Almighty orders in the Holy Qur'an: "And don't follow your vain desires as they will cause you to deviate from the way of Allah."

Our Grandshaykh was saying about Adam that when Allah Almighty put him in Paradise and said to him: "Everything has been granted, enjoy every abundance except this fruit tree which you must not approach," Adam's ego was saying: "Oh my Lord, You don't want me to eat from it, but I want to eat." Because of his ego's desire being out of line with his Lord's desire, he was vulnerable to the suggestion of Satan; therefore, he had to go to Earth to learn manners and discipline, the sum of which is to say inside of ourselves, "As You like my Lord." If we can't say this in our innermost selves, it means that we are making our desire lord over our Guardian Lord Almighty.

When Adam ate from that tree in opposition to his Lord's Will, Allah took from him his paradise clothes and left him naked and ashamed in order to make him feel shame at what he had done.

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We must be very careful of attributing partners to Allah Almighty through our actions. If we can be careful of these fine points, then it is easy for us to receive Divine Lights in our hearts.

The Prophet, Peace be Upon Him, was saying about Abu Bakr, May Allah be pleased with Him, that he was one who 'died before he died.' From among all the companions, why was it Abu Bakr who accomplished this? — Because he had absolutely left all his desires

behind, so that there was nothing left of them in the face of his Lord and his Prophet. He was as a dead person with no desire for this life. When he had arrived at this state, he was like a shadow for the Prophet, and you can't find a shadow that doesn't entirely agree with its original; to this absolute extent Abu Bakr never left the Prophet's way. Because of this attribute, Abu Bakr became trustworthy in all respects, and thus the Prophet was able to plant many knowledge's in his heart. The Prophet knew that Abu Bakr would not do anything contrary to his wish or his liking. Therefore, in spiritual rank, Abu Bakr was at the top of all the companions of the Prophet.

Sayyidina 'Ali was also one of the Prophet's companions who never used his will or desires against the will of the Prophet or contrary to the Prophet's desires. He was one of two among all the Sahaba who had put his desires totally in line with the Prophet's desires. Therefore, 'Ali has been described by the Prophet as follows: "I am the City of Knowledge and 'Ali is the Gate to that City." My Grandshaykh was saying that because the Prophet was so pleased with 'Ali's following him like a shadow, one day he ordered 'Ali to look at him; when 'Ali looked at the Prophet, the Prophet showed him his real Prophethood personality in the Divine Presence. No one may look at that personality until he reaches the station of Sayyidina 'Ali; what is that station? — It is the station of being a shadow in every action.

Once the Son of 'Umar was going to Hijaz, traveling by camel. When he arrived at a certain point in the road he made a detour to the right, rode around in a circle and then returned to the road, continuing on his way. People asked him, "Oh Son of 'Umar, the road was going straight, so why did you go around in a circle?" He replied, "Oh people, I was once accompanying the Prophet on this road and when he came to that point he

made a circle to the right, then he continued on straight; therefore, I wanted to do as the Prophet had done.”

Look at how the companions were desiring and doing what the Prophet desired and did. If anyone can attain to that station, then the Prophet may show him his real Prophethood personality in the Divine Presence, for even now the Prophet is alive, but not in the same way that we are alive — he has real life in the Divine Presence. Both Abu Bakr and ‘Ali reached their divine positions and took their holy trusts from the Prophet during this life. Others from among the Sahaba took their trusts only upon reaching the hereafter.

Grandshaykh told me that one day Sayyidina ‘Ali said to Sayyidina ‘Umar, regarding the secret knowledge that had been opened up to him: “Oh ‘Umar, if I would speak to you from the secret knowledges which have been opened up to us, you would instantly cut my head off with your sword; you wouldn’t be able to let me get up from my seat if I told you from the secrets of the Way, the creation, the religion, Prophethood and the secrets of Allah Almighty — you can’t even listen.”

When the Prophet was taken to the Heavens on the Night Journey or Ascension (Mi’raj), the news of this miraculous journey spread among the Muslims. ‘Umar, on hearing this — to him — incomprehensible news, ran to see the Prophet to find out for himself what this was all about. On the way to see the Prophet he ran into Abu Bakr and asked him: “What is your companion (Muhammad) saying, are you believing such a thing?” Abu Bakr, who had as of yet not met with the Prophet since the mi’raj, said: “Oh ‘Umar, what are you saying? If all of creation has been created for his sake, is it too much for him to ascend to the heavens or perform other miracles? Oh ‘Umar, I believe he is capable of even greater miracles than this; he is so great, so respected

in the Divine Presence that no one can know his real personality but his Lord.”

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SURPASSING THE MIND'S LIMITATIONS

Grandshaykh was telling me about Ka'b-ul Ahbar, the most learned man among the Jews living in Hijaz in the time of the Prophet. Because of his great learning, Ka'b was expecting the coming of a Prophet, the Last Prophet, whose appearance he had found foretold in the Scriptures.

Ka'b's knowledge was so extensive that he had reached to the 'Station of Gabriel', but not beyond. According to Grandshaykh, knowledge is divided into two parts: one part extends from the Earth to the Station of Gabriel. The Sons of Adam may learn these knowledges through their intellectual efforts. The other part extends upward from the Station of Gabriel. Gabriel is the Angel who represents intelligence — and intellectual knowledge reaches up to his station; however, after that station are oceans of strange and wonderful knowledges which are all out of the boundaries of the mind and intellect. The mind is not capable of balancing those knowledges, and when confronted with them can only say, "No further can I go, I have reached my limit."

Technologically learned people are floundering and struggling unsuccessfully to arrive at a complete understanding of the creation through empirical knowledge — they want to be able to see everything in front of their two eyes and analyse it; they want to analyse everything by means of their five senses, and anything outside of the perception of their senses is

rejected. Whoso says that knowledge is limited to what the five senses can observe and does not accept any other type of knowledge, he is a fool, for you can never limit knowledge at all.

In order to prove this point, it is enough to point out that every day in the scientific fields they work in there is progress, and all the time they are progressing from one horizon of knowledge to the next. If one were to say, "This is the last horizon," he would be foolish, for when he arrives at that first horizon there will be yet another in front of him, and so on; in fact, endless horizons may be discovered — and so it is with knowledge; endless horizons, and the only limits are in our minds. If we can surpass those limits, we will find that whenever we are tired and cannot go on any further, there will appear another horizon — oceans, endless oceans. To reach the next ocean you must discard this mind, otherwise you will have been caught and trapped by it.

People can acquire many knowledges through study and practice, and they may attain high degrees, but as long as they are bound to mind's limitations, they can advance no further. Ka'b was a person who advanced through his mind to the Station of Gabriel but couldn't go on from there. He knew the Prophet well but delayed his acceptance of Islam until the time of 'Umar; therefore, he delayed also in reaching that spiritual knowledge.

Grandshaykh was saying about the third Khalifa, 'Uthman, that he was of a very high degree among the Sahaba and was the most modest of the Prophet's companions. He performed so many services for the Prophet, and after the Prophet's lifetime he gathered all the verses and Surahs of the Holy Qur'an into book form. In spite of this, 'Uthman didn't attain the spiritual ranks attained by Abu Bakr and 'Ali because he sometimes held firmly to his own desires instead of putting them

completely in line with the Prophet's. This was also one reason for his martyrdom: misfortunes befell him as a result of his not being able to totally leave his own desires behind.

Man hasn't the capacity to carry all knowledges in his mind and body, and yet he asks for more and more: this is a sign for mankind that within them there exists something which is always asking without ever becoming satiated. This 'something' is above our physical bodies and minds, a power which controls them and without which neither of them could function. Therefore, beyond any doubt, our bodies and minds are under the control of an unknown, indescribable, 'supernatural' power. That power impels man to seek more and more knowledge, endlessly; but the mind cannot keep all these knowledges, and so it says, "I can't." But still man asks for more, because there is something above our minds controlling it, and that 'something' is our soul and the indescribable power behind it. This is the meaning of the verse which says that Allah Almighty created man for the purpose of knowing Him, for His Divine Knowledges.

Every knowledge which has appeared points to the Creator and describes His attributes, but still we are asking to know who our Creator is and what His attributes are, as our souls are always thirsty to know their Lord and to approach Him. The more we know our Lord, the more we are going to love Him, and the more we love Him, the more we will approach Him and taste of boundless bliss.

If we put a spoon of sugar in this glass of water, it will dissolve; and in like manner up to four or five spoonfuls will dissolve, but more than that it will be unable to absorb, and the sugar will fall to the bottom of the glass. Likewise, our minds have a limited capacity for absorbing knowledge — they reach their maximum,

beyond which they cannot go. Our limited minds are as incapable of absorbing boundless Divine Knowledge as that little glass of water would be of absorbing all the sugar in the world. Our souls, however, have unlimited capacity for knowledge and will ever be thirsting for more. As long as the soul is imprisoned by the senses of the physical body, our mind will hold it down. The mind is the guardian over the soul and keeps it passive, inactive. The situation will remain so until you transcend the boundaries of the mind and open yourself up for the soul's activity — endless activity; but people are closed, and only the souls of Prophets and Saints are really opened up — all others are sleeping, passive, imprisoned.

How and why do our souls remain passive? You must pay close attention to this point. When we are putting the desires of our physical bodies over and above the desires of our Lord and His Prophet, there can be no activity for our souls. The reason for the passivity of the soul is that we follow the dictates of our minds, which are, in turn, striving only to please the physical body. If you are able to reject the base dictates of your mind and follow the desires of the Prophet, then soul-activity will appear little by little.

Among the Sahaba, the most active soul was the soul of Abu Bakr because he never put his desires in the first place; after him came Sayyidina 'Ali who, in like manner, attained strong soul-activity. It is incumbent upon us (Fard) to do as much as we possibly can of our Lord's desires, and it is a meritorious action (Sunna) to do as much as we can of the Prophet's desires; those who have done their utmost to fulfil this Fard and Sunna have attained the light of Sainthood. Of all the souls, the brightest is that of Sayyidina Muhammad, after his the souls of the other Prophets, and after them, the soul of Abu Bakr As-Siddiq.

Therefore, the Tariqat-an-Naqshbandiyya, (as it is passed down through Abu Bakr As-Siddiq), activates the souls of the murids to whatever extent the murid can bring his desires to accord with the desires of his Shaykh. So many murids have high spiritual aspiration (Himma) and they say: “Oh my Shaykh, I am asking for himma in order that my soul be activated.” The Shaykh replies: “Oh my son, I am asking service from you (Khidma). What is this service? You must be like me; when you are like me, my spiritual powers may come to you, but if we are not of the same kind of metal, the current can’t pass through you: I am copper, you must not remain stone.”

Once Grandshaykh told me that his Shaykh, Shaykh Sharafuddin, said to him: “Oh ‘Abdullah Efendi, look at me and tell me what you see.” Grandshaykh looked and said: “Oh my Shaykh, when I look at you, I see myself.” Then Shaykh Sharafuddin said: “Now look at yourself.” He looked at himself and saw Shaykh Sharafuddin — there was no opposition in him to prevent this from happening. Allah Almighty asked the Prophet to be with Him, and the Prophet asked the Sahaba to be with him; to be ‘with him’ meant for them to be as he wished for them to be. The Shaykh, also, is asking murids to be ‘with him’.

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SAYYIDINA ‘UMAR’S MERITS, SAYYIDINA ABU BAKR’S PERFECTION

Our Grandshaykh was praising the second Khalifa ‘Umar, and pointed to ‘Umar’s having said: “In the time of ignorance (Jahiliyya), before the Prophethood of Muhammad, I was always very careful to avoid three sins which later came to be strongly forbidden by Islam.

First of all, I never lied because I knew that if a person was ever caught lying, his value in the sight of people would be reduced to the value of that lie: no value at all is given to a person who is known as a liar, so I never permitted myself to do that. In Islam, every sin may be forgiven, as repentance is the key that opens the door of forgiveness; but lies uproot faith itself, making repentance ever more difficult.”

“Secondly, I never drank wine. Everyone else in Jahiliyya was drinking, and when I looked at them in that drunken state I could understand, even then, that they were throwing away the honour given to them as the Sons of Adam. It is the particular honour of the Sons of Adam to be endowed with minds, so why throw it away? How could I throw away this honour and become like an animal, the way I saw the others doing it — some were becoming like wolves, some like donkeys, and some like hyenas — dancing, laughing, shouting, fighting.”

“Thirdly, I never looked lustfully at women belonging to other men. I never desired unlawful intercourse with another’s lady because I would not suffer anyone to look at my lady, and so I did not want to do unto others what I would never have them do unto me; this is a basic attribute of knighthood. These three evil actions I avoided even before Islam, and now I avoid them with even greater care. If everyone kept away from these three prohibited actions, there would be no more trouble on the Earth.”

Yet, despite these most admirable characteristics of Sayyidina ‘Umar, he did at times set his will against the will of the Prophet. Often ‘Umar would be quick to unsheathe his sword and ask permission to decapitate hypocrites, but the Prophet would say: “No, ‘Umar, put away your sword.” This sort of thing may happen but a few times, but the effect is that the soul is kept from

awakening, it remains passive.

Abu Bakr never spoke up against the Prophet's will at all, and the same is true for 'Ali. Abu Bakr's soul was the most active of the whole Ummah, and so the Prophet laid upon him a burden which no one else in the Ummah could have borne: the Khalifate, or guardianship over the whole Nation. When the Prophet, Peace be Upon Him, died, 'Umar was thrown into total confusion and said: "I will behead anyone who says that Muhammad has died." Abu Bakr arrived, and seeing that the Prophet was dead, kissed him and said: "No one tastes death twice," then he mounted the pulpit and quoted the Quranic verse:

"And Muhammad is but a Messenger; Messengers have passed away before him, so if he were to die or be killed would you turn on your heels and flee (from Islam) and whoso turns on his heels won't hurt Allah in the least and Allah will reward the thankful."

(Surat Al-Imran, Ayat 42)

When 'Umar heard this, he was amazed and said: "Is this really from the Qur'an?" Abu Bakr replied: "Yes 'Umar, you must know that the Prophet has died, Allah Almighty has called him to His Divine Presence." Then 'Umar put away his sword and wept.

Regarding 'Umar, our Grandshaykh furthermore said, that because he was sometimes openly stating his desires despite their being contrary to the Prophet's, that he never attained the secret knowledge which Abu Bakr and 'Ali attained. For example, sometimes there came to the Prophet some people who were not yet real believers and would therefore raise some objections to what the Prophet told them. The Prophet tolerated

such people and their behaviour without becoming angry, and always demonstrated exemplary patience — but ‘Umar would become very angry, saying: “Oh my Prophet, let me chop off the heads of these hypocrites!” The worst characteristic of the ego is hypocrisy; every nation and every religion condemns these people. They are dangerous and harmful because they are hiding their hearts’ real intentions and making a show of false feelings. So, ‘Umar quickly wanted to cut off their heads, but the Prophet, Peace be Upon Him, said: “Oh ‘Umar, don’t judge people’s intentions in this manner, for unless Allah Almighty informs me of their hypocrisy directly through Gabriel, even I cannot know for sure; so how shall you know?”

In light of this, Grandshaykh is stressing the following point: that we should always show our best manners to our Shaykh by not raising any objections to the way in which the Shaykh handles people and situations, or to the orders he gives. In order for this to be possible, you must first of all believe in him as the Sahaba were believing in the Prophet. For as much as you believe in a person, that much you may give your reins over to his hands, and so find rest and satisfaction in your heart. As long as you are trying to catch the reins in your own hands, you are carrying a great burden on your shoulders. Shaykhs are the inheritors of the Prophets and are offering to carry your burdens — and you must give your burdens to them, or else you are like Nasruddin Hodja in the following story:

One day Nasruddin Hodja was coming home from market on his donkey, carrying his bags over his own shoulders. The people asked, “Oh Hodja, why are you burdening your shoulders when you could sling the bags over the donkey and ride as well?” Hodja replied, “It is too much for the donkey, so I am carrying it.” If you don’t give over your burden you are like this. Give your

load to your Shaykh — do you see a person sitting on the deck of a ship with his bags on his shoulders instead of laying them down on the deck? Shaykhs are offering to carry our burden, so don't be so foolish as to keep it with you; just put your desires in line with the Shaykh's — that is the way to open your heart to heavenly power. Then you may see or hear or know something which you cannot now know.

The Prophet used to say that he was but a powerless servant and completely dependent upon his Lord; and when he said this, Allah Almighty gave him from His Absolute Powers, saying: "For as much as you are admitting your own powerlessness, that much power We will give to you." Our Prophet is going to act as judge for the whole Nation. You must leave your will in favour of his, then your perception will open — this is the Way.

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REAL SERVANTHOOD, FIGHTING THE EGO, AND QUESTIONS

Now our Grandshaykh is explaining to us a very important sign of attainment to real servanthood of our Lord. Unless this sign has appeared, it is impossible that one has in reality become a servant. This sign is: That one's will is subdued to the Will of the Lord.

Trains run on rails, and if they derail, they are immediately destroyed. Their wheels must stay on the rails, and in the same manner your willpower must be aligned with the Will of your Lord, otherwise you are not a real servant and you will encounter the direst difficulties as a result — for when a train derails, it is a very terrible thing. You may confirm this by examining your own lives, for such an examination will reveal that

as soon as you stray from the track of your Lord, terrible things happen to you.

It is really very difficult for our will to agree with our Lord's Will, difficult for our egos. The ego always says, "I must be your Lord, you must move according to my commands." This is the main reason for the suffering of mankind.

Yes, it is difficult to fight your ego and make it go according to the Lord's Will, but if you are patient and perseverant in this struggle, Allah will reward you with success. Allah sets a limit for every trial and difficulty, so that it may continue from this point to that, but no more: "When My servant shows Me that he can be patient, I will be satisfied that it is enough, and I shall save him from that difficulty." Maybe you have seen a plane gliding down a runway trying to take off; for the distance of that runway it must give all the power it's got, and it is a very dangerous time, but when it comes to that essential speed required for take-off, it will fly with ease. Therefore, Grandshaykh is saying that we must be patient as we are in need of going that distance on our 'runway'. It is a limited distance for everyone — for some, forty days, some seventy, for another one year. When you have borne that heavy burden for that specified distance and have been patient with the Will of your Lord, you will arrive at the time when you shall smell the fragrance of dawn. That fragrant breeze will lift you up in just the same manner that the plane finally leaves the runway. Allah Almighty will send to you a kind of invigorating breeze that will lift you from the attachment and hankering after this low life and inundate you with power from His Divine Power, so that you will never again be an 'ordinary person'.

His Power will carry you with no difficulty, but first you must come the required distance, fighting

your nafs all the time (Jihad-al-Akbar), then Allah will open His Knowledge Oceans to that servant, so that he may swim in them. At that time the servant knows his Lord's Power Oceans, and also knows Allah Almighty's Justice Oceans; what is the extent of these Justice Oceans? It is endless, absolute Justice. Anyone who has borne those difficulties must receive, in the end, through His absolute Justice, miraculous powers. You may be learned or illiterate, man or woman, king, farmer, millionaire, or penniless — whoever bears those tests for the required period with patience, will reap his reward. "To whomever has patience I will give My power and call to My Divine Presence, so make ready, Oh My servants, and come to Me!"

Sultan-ul-Arifin Abu-Yazid Al-Bistami asked his Lord: "Oh my Lord, how can I come to You, and what is the distance to reach to You?" The reply came: "Oh Abu-Yazid, I am but a step away: step on your ego and come to Me; as far as your ego extends, that is the distance to Me." That is by no means an easy step or a short one. The reality of that step is that you must put your will alongside Allah Almighty's Will like wheels roll on the track; in that way you will reach your destination, otherwise not. You must think this over carefully, and you may take so many lessons from this lecture. Whoever is desiring to be in the Divine Presence, let him hold to this method. You need not run after so many teachers all propagating their various methods — the method of Buddhism, the method of Christianity or Judaism — just step on your ego and come: this is the summary of every one of those methods; if you can do this, you will arrive.

(At this point in the lecture a person in attendance observed): "Sheikh Nazim, excuse me, but I have observed that the followers of your Tariqat usually eat well, sleep well, are well dressed and laugh a lot. How,

then, are they stepping on their egos?”

The horses of knights are so strong that they rear up on their hind legs — they are well rested, well nourished, and well disciplined. They run with great speed and endurance after the enemy. Shah Naqshband says: “Oh my people, our Tariqat is very easy: eat the best food, wear the best clothes (not like in other Tariqats), and perform good actions.” That is our Tariqat — easy, but good actions are not what the ego wants, so that part of our Tariqat is not so easy. You may eat well and dress well, but your good actions are based upon your getting up during the night — one, two or three hours before dawn every day, to be with your Lord. If you do this, you will be with your Lord just as naturally as you are with people every day. Then your horse will be strong, but there will be an even stronger rider on it; if you put a woman or an old person on such a strong horse, it will run away throwing the rider off — you must become a strong, expert horseman to control it.

For weaker people, there is the method of always starving the ego, but in our Tariqat we fight it during intense and strenuous fighting seasons — training seasons for our horses. For forty days twice in the year, we tame the horse and perfect our control over it; afterwards, it is free to graze and enjoy within the fences of Allah’s bounds (Halal). We may wear nice clothes, live in nice houses, use cars and planes without them detracting from our spiritual lives, because we can keep our horses. If your horse goes out of control, the Shaykh will put you in ‘prison’ — but he will only do so for those whom he is responsible.

What is the method of fighting the ego in our Naqshbandi Tariqat? — To become accustomed to doing everything with permission of the Shaykh, especially concerning marriage, divorce and long journeys, and it

is best to consult him in every important matter.

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(A question was asked as to how this would be possible for Murids in the United States, Australia and other distant countries who only are able to see the Shaykh perhaps once a year or once every two years):

We possess a ‘walkie-talkie’, and thus we can send waves from heart to heart. We may listen also, as we are in no way behind those scientists who send messages to distant rockets and to other parts of the Earth via satellites — we also send waves. If you know the wavelength, you can tune in, for a real Shaykh must send. According to a murid’s station, a real Shaykh can send him those waves: At the first station, the Shaykh’s presence comes on the heart of the disciple. At a more advanced stage, the murid may actually feel the Shaykh by his side and perceive his breathing. The final and most advanced stage is when the spiritual power of the Shaykh dresses itself on the murid, so that in effect he ‘becomes’ the Shaykh for a specified time.

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(One of those present that day spoke to the Shaykh as follows): “I imagine that you Shaykhs must get weary of teaching and lecturing day in and day out! I hope that when you have finished with this series of lectures you may get some rest and relaxation. Don’t Shaykhs ever get tired of teaching?”

A Shaykh must always be busy with his disciples, for he is like the heart — it never stops. When the heart stops, the body will die; therefore, the Shaykh must be active wherever he is and at all times. A real Shaykh speaks to people in accordance to their ranks and levels

of understanding, as such Shaykhs are inheritors of the Prophet Muhammad, who said: “Whosoever wants to teach people must be careful to notice the level of understanding of his audience and to address them accordingly.” Because of this general principle, one may find in the Prophet’s sayings many different manners of description; each manner was used by him according to which of the many different types of people were listening at the time. Maybe this will surprise or bewilder some people who read those sayings, but we can understand that he was speaking to them on their respective levels.

Each of the 124,000 companions of the Prophet represented one of the types of mankind living in the future up until the end of the world. So, in reality, when he addressed his companions, he addressed all people. In like manner, the Prophet’s inheritors address people in a way that those people can understand and draw benefit from. This is easy for the real inheritors of the Prophet; but if they are only inheritors of books, having read and memorized some knowledges, then it is a great difficulty for them to address people effectively according to their levels of understanding. Those who have inherited through the heart may easily address people in such a way as will please them and make their hearts light. So, we are saying that whoever is connected to the ‘central generator’ in the spiritual world easily receives and transmits, but for him who has no connection, it is exceedingly difficult.

For real Shaykhs, speaking to people in a way that benefits them is as easy and natural as is eating or drinking. I never saw anyone who could so easily address people in this way as my Grandshaykh. It made no difference whatsoever to him whether there were one-thousand people in the assembly or just one, but so many learned people who call people together in order to advise them will not even speak unless there is a fair

number attending his assembly; “Why should I speak for these few people?” But Grandshaykh was such a huge fountain, supplying all those who came to ask of him: if someone came to drink, he could drink; if one came to bathe, he could bathe and if one came seeking heart-to-heart spiritual contact, he might receive this also.

Sultan Al-Arifin Abu-Yazid AI-Bistami told the Doctors of Islamic Law (Ulema): “You carry your knowledge on your shoulders as a burden — you must look up, read and memorize always, just to keep it in your minds, but for the Awliya who learn from their Lord’s Divine Presence (Ilm-ul-ladunni), that knowledge is carrying them and there is no worry for them of losing that knowledge. You are always in fear of forgetting your knowledges, and little by little they will melt away until, at the end, nothing remains of them; but we are not in any fear of that happening to us.”

My Grandshaykh, when he was over a hundred years old, used to speak from morning till night. The knowledges which he imparted on any given day would suffice for a whole book to be written about them. This was not a burden for him. because he was in connection with Allah Almighty’s Knowledge Oceans; from those Oceans flow channels into the hearts of the Awliya.

If my Grandshaykh’s power would fully appear, no one could be sitting here; but that tremendous guiding and directing power (Irshad) is being stored up for the time of Sayyidina Al-Mahdi. At that time, all other Tariqats will be engulfed by the huge irshad-power carried through the Naqshbandiyya Tariqat — they will be engulfed like in-land seas being absorbed into a great ocean. Other Tariqats are already all slowly grinding to a halt, not moving forward. Since no Grandshaykhs are appearing among them, all that is left of them is their saying, “Follow this Tariqat or that one.” Since no

Grandshaykhs are now appearing among them, they are only imitating what they found their predecessors practicing, without being able to improve — like soldiers marching in place.

(A person in attendance commented): “Some of the Shaykhs of the other Tariqats are angry at you for your making such statements; they think that you are making Naqshbandi politics, trying to take away their disciples.”

(Sheikh Nazim replied): Don’t speak foolish words. They may scream, “Politics!” and they may be angry, but they must know that what we are saying is reality, not politics; for we hate politics. If they have real spiritual knowledge (Maanawi Ulum), then they may see the reality of what we are saying; if not, they may be angry — but their anger is useless. Now, the Last Prophet, Muhammad, is present in the spiritual realm and for the Awliya there is an assembly with the Prophet’s Presence every night. If they are there, they may realize and know; if not, then they are only with us — not seeing what will happen and not seeing the reality of what happens now. If the latter is the case, then they are only looking at books and talking, and you can’t know these things like that — no, that knowledge is distinct, it comes by way of the hearts.

When you are mentioning the names of persons, we may know whether they are inside or outside. In the time of ‘Abdul-Qadir Al-Jilani, a great Grandshaykh, there was another sheikh who heard about him and said to his pupils: “I have heard so much about this Shaykh ‘Abdul-Qadir, but I have been sitting at the entrance of Allah Almighty’s Power Castle for thirty years, and up until now I haven’t seen him entering or leaving, so how is it that they are saying he is such a huge Shaykh?” When ‘Abdul-Qadir heard this, he laughed and said:

“How can a doorkeeper know who sits in the presence of the King, in the proximity of the Majestic Lord?”

And so, you may find so many Tariqat Shaykhs, but their levels are different. So why are they angry? Do they claim to know everything? What we have stated we know from the heavenly assembly, and that knowledge is coming to us from the ‘central power station’, so that if they bring forward a statement, claim or knowledge, we know from where they are bringing it. If anyone is angry because of these things, he is providing proof that he is not from the Assembly of Awliya; but he who says, “I believe in this and more,” you must know that he is from within.

All Tariqats teach people humbleness and to accept the truth. Who accompanied the Prophet when he made his migration (Hijra) from Makkah to Madinah? — Abu Bakr. And what did the Prophet say about Abu Bakr? — “Everything My Lord put into my heart, I have put into the heart of Abu Bakr.” Which Shaykh can come to argue with us saying, “Abu Bakr is our father in Tariqat”? (Only the Naqshbandiyya Tariqat traces its lineage back to the Prophet through Abu Bakr, the rest of the Tariqats came through Sayyidina ‘Ali). Grandshaykh is the inheritor of Abu Bakr — only ignorant people can deny this.

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THE LADDER TO THE MOON, EFFORT AND TRUST IN THE LORD

It is a very important point that Grandshaykh will speak upon tonight. I say that Grandshaykh will speak because the Awliya are living real lives; they are living stars, not dead stars; they are living persons even after

their disappearance from bodily life. When they leave this world and go to heavenly life, they leave behind them a deputy whom they cause to speak on their behalf; therefore, when I speak here, my Grandshaykh is speaking through me — making me speak on behalf of him. For this reason, I said that he is going to speak on an important point.

Grandshaykh was saying that a great Wali and lover of the Prophet, Ibn ‘Umar as-Safadi, was saying: “If a person leaves everything and abstains from action, saying that he need not act because he trusts in his Lord and that his Lord is sufficient for him and will provide what His servant is in need of, then that person has become an unrighteous and sinful person.”

Here Grandshaykh is clarifying the real relationship between the servant and his Lord, saying: “There is a certain distance which servants must advance, and only when that distance has been covered and its limit crossed, that servant may say, ‘From here on I leave everything to my Lord and from this point on I entrust all my affairs to my Lord!’” For example, a farmer ploughs his field and plants corn, then he leaves it and has the right to just wait until the harvest is yielded. He may trust in his Lord to give him that yield, but if a person is not ploughing and not planting, but just saying, “I am trusting in my Lord to give me corn at harvest time”, he is indeed far astray in his thinking and actions. You must be aware of your duty and carry it out. You can’t bring rain, you can’t force the corn to grow and bring forth cobs, but you can plant and plough — then you can trust in your Lord to finish what you have begun. This is what true trust in Allah (Tawakkul) is like.

This is a very important point, and one often misunderstood, especially in European countries, where people raise objections to Islam, claiming that Islam

tells people that they need not work, and should depend only on their Lord's favours. In the present time even in the Muslim world, the younger generation is saying that Islam is the cause for the backwardness of their countries — but this is the result of wrong understanding. In fact, what Islam tells us is that we may begin a work with our own action, but it is Allah who completes, and that the success of any endeavour is ultimately in His Hands.

This is a world of causes. We are in need of causes and must hold on to them in this life, because miraculous doings may occur sometimes for Prophets and Saints, but not for everyone. For that reason, we have been ordered by our Prophet, Peace be Upon Him, to hold to causes so that we may witness effects and obtain results. Allah Almighty says that no one reaches anything in this world without acting — he must act and see the results. So, to act is a command from Allah Almighty and therefore we must not just sit down without movement and without action. Trusting in Allah, or leaving your affairs to Allah, is correct only after we have finished our duty.

Sometimes in Tariqats, Shaykhs may try a murid by ordering him to abandon every cause, to not seek his own means of existence. But such cases are only rare exceptions and not the general rule — the general rule is to seek means, as Allah commands.

Why was our Grandshaykh speaking upon this point? He is not mentioning it here in the context of worldly works, or actions for this life, but rather he is referring to effort required of us for reaching heavenly stations and Divine Knowledge Oceans. You must strive and do good actions as much as you can, and when you finish, after doing your utmost, Allah Almighty will lift you up. If you are asking for heavenly stations and miraculous powers, you must first struggle and not just

say, “Allah may give us,” or, “My action is not sufficient for me to reach such heavenly stations.”

A good analogy to illustrate this point is this one: Someone was given a broken pick and spade and was told: “Take these instruments and dig up all seven layers of the Earth until you reach the end where you will find your treasure.” Do you think that it is possible to reach it with a broken pick and spade? — Of course not, but despite this you must dig as best as you can and not give up, saying, “How can I perform this feat?” Your duty is to dig little by little, and your Lord is looking after you so that when He sees that you are firmly believing and working as ordered, He will send His Help just as you have reached the point of exhaustion and can’t do more. At that time He will send a huge machine that will dig up your treasures for you instantly and effortlessly. Because you are a powerless servant carrying out His order. He will bring your treasure up for you with His power, not yours. He is only testing you: are you listening, believing, obeying? If you begin, He will finish, but if you say, “It is impossible for even the largest machines — so how shall I ever do it?”, you will be banned from the Divine Presence. If you begin your digging in spite of the obvious impossibility of the task, then Allah’s Holy Verse in the Qur’an will apply to you:

“Allah does not burden anyone beyond his capabilities.”

(Surat al-Baqarah, Ayat 286)

We are not claiming that we will attain all heavenly stations as a result of our practices; we are only doing what our power enables us to do and, in reality, to reach the goal by means of our practices is like trying to reach the moon with a ladder; even if all the world’s ladders were tied together you couldn’t reach it — it is

impossible; but we must try anyway, for perhaps one night from the moon there will descend a ladder to meet our ladder, and at that time it may be possible to go up, but for us to build up to the moon — never. We must do our duty. Allah says that doing our duty is the cause of our reaching to Heavens, but you must know that it is not enough. We know that ladders go up, but not to the moon. This is the precise meaning of Tariqat, and we are not cheating people: if one is working with sincerity, our Lord may send a ladder at any time from the moon to take you up, but you must do your work, and trust in your Lord.

Many people are reading in books about miraculous happenings, and sometimes our ego asks for us to be one of these ‘miracle-makers’. Tariqat is the way to be able to perform miracles, but we are not working in order to be able to do such things, but only for our Lord’s pleasure. When He is pleased with us, He will also make us pleased with Him, and at that time you won’t be able to even look at or consider miraculous doings; it is only your ego asking to perform such feats.

Our Grandshaykh is saying at the end of this lecture: “I am speaking on behalf of the Master of the Time (Sahib-Uz-Zaman), Sayyidina Al-Mahdi, because he is not yet permitted to appear and address people directly; therefore, I have been given permission in his stead. When he appears, you will witness how he speaks.” Grandshaykh continued: “This assembly has the same virtues as the assembly of Sayyidina Al-Mahdi and holds the same reward. These knowledges are not the results of reading books but come directly from the heart of the Holy Prophet, Peace be Upon Him. Allah Almighty gives these knowledges to those who trust in Him and keep His orders with full respect.”

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MIRACLES: THE POWER TO PACK THE UNIVERSE INTO A THIMBLE

My Grandshaykh says that very rarely there may occur some miracles, but commonly everything happens through causes. Only in exceptional cases do some events occur which are inexplicable by means of ordinary causes. Such exceptions may be a few in each century; for example, a few years ago I heard about a boy who could solve the most difficult arithmetical problems, problems which would be impossible for even educated adults to solve. So, in the spiritual world, some events may happen which appear in the lives of some people as miraculous events which no one can explain through ordinary means.

Grandshaykh is explaining why such miracles do, at times, occur: Firstly, in order to declare to all people that there is a Lord of the Universe who does what He wills, and that no causes affect Him nor is He subject to any natural laws; He is the One who creates those laws and causes, but they are not binding upon Him. His sovereignty is absolute, and His Kingdom is free of anyone else's command; He alone commands and does what He likes and as He likes. We must know with absolute certainty that He has the Power to do everything and anything.

Grandshaykh told me the following example of how Allah Almighty may do what He likes. For example, Allah Almighty may put the whole world into a thimble. How? If we consider this according to 'empirical knowledge' we may agree that it is within the realm of possibility, as now in astronomy, scientists have discovered that there are some stars of which a teaspoonful of material weighs one billion tons — neutron stars. Scientists are doing research and gaining knowledge of this, as Allah

gave them minds to observe the Earth and the Heavens. So, taking this information into account, one could say, “Such a hypothesis is valid, why not — perhaps indeed the whole world could be put into a thimble.” This is our minds’ estimate and calculation, but Allah Almighty is not going to do as we think, for He can put the whole world into a thimble without making the thimble larger or the world smaller. Nothing can oppose His Will, and if He orders it to be, then it must be — this is Allah Almighty’s Power (Qudrah). In our minds, we may imagine making the thimble larger or the world smaller, but if He did it like this there would be no difference between servant and Lord.

The first reason why Allah decrees miraculous happenings is to show people that He can do what He wills. Thus, He also gives to whom He wills secret knowledges without their ever having studied or worked to attain them. Our Grandshaykh said that he was given such powers from childhood on; but the completion of the Awliyas’ powers lies in their keeping them to themselves and not demonstrating their miraculous faculties: herein lies their true greatness. The Awliya are like volcanoes, within them lie tremendous powers — but, as the volcano seems like an ordinary mountain, to you the Awliya may seem to be as ordinary people.

Some people now contend that the Awliya are no different from us: “What are you saying, all this about Awliya — what is the difference between us and them?” The answer to such people is this: “They may seem to you to be no different than yourselves; the people of Makkah were also regarding the Prophet and saying, ‘He is like us, how can he say such things?’” Today, people are saying, regarding the Awliya, “They have two legs, two arms, one nose etc., Just like us, so why is so much power attributed to them?” In outer appearance they are ordinary people, but inwardly they are absolutely

different, as different as two wires, one carrying electric current and one not. The one carrying the current looks exactly like the ordinary one, for you can't see the current passing through it — but just put your finger on each one, and then tell me whether they are the same! — One wire strikes you and knocks you out the door! Awliya are not speaking now, but when their time comes, they may send you with one slap from here to Germany or England. Awliya have Divine Powers because they have given their physical bodies over to the absolute control of their Lord and because they never resist that control by trying to exercise their own will. They have freed themselves from the grip of their egos and have given themselves over to their Lord, so that Divine Power runs through their bodies, and with these powers they may do miraculous doings.

The second reason why Allah Almighty sends miracles is so that no one will be cut off from hope in his Lord; if not for these miracles, so many would fall into despair. Because of their occurrence no one may say, "I cannot reach those Knowledge Oceans, I am so lazy, how shall I reach those ranks?" Instead, they may always hope for their Lord's aid. Perhaps as a result of that servant's admission of weakness, Allah may give him all ranks, and perhaps Allah may give to one that high rank for no reason at all. We may ask of our Lord anything, and our Lord will never refuse His servant's request, but since some desires of His servant may be no good for him, He keeps them from him and grants them instead as a reward on the Last Day.

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GRAVES HAVE EARS; THE STATION OF OUR GRANDSHAYKH

A Murshid, a Grandshaykh, who teaches and educates people, is like a professor of surgery who gives lessons by operating on a corpse, thus showing his students what they need to learn.

Our Grandshaykh has now explained to us, from the beginning, about Satan, in order to teach us what the reason for his having been banished from the Divine Presence was. Then he told us about Adam, and how he was sent down from Paradise. After that, he spoke about the companions of the Prophet, particularly the four rightly-guided Khalifas, and through his teachings he gave us some indication of why Abu Bakr holds the first place and attained the highest degrees, why ‘Ali also attained great spiritual knowledge, and why Sayyidina ‘Umar and Sayyidina ‘Uthman were not on the same level of spiritual development as ‘Ali and Abu Bakr.

When a Grandshaykh who has real inheritance from the Prophet speaks about the people in the graves, those people concerned may listen to him. Every Grandshaykh having that rank may speak in front of any gathering of people, and his speech will be heard by all Saints, living or in the life of the grave (Barzakh); this is a miracle given to them. Quickly they may be heard, like nowadays when a president addresses an assembly, every president and every government will quickly hear or read that speech — if Sultan Al-Awliya speaks, it must be heard all over.

This lecture about Satan and Adam, and about the Sahaba was given by Grandshaykh after the morning prayer, and in the afternoon of the same day Grandshaykh told me: “Oh Nazim Efendi, this morning’s

lecture has been heard by the companions of the Prophet in their graves, and they were very pleased with it, as we have been given a miraculous favour from the Lord that if we notice an incompleteness on the part of anyone, and point it out, it will become complete. When I was pointing out that some of the Sahaba were sometimes using their own wills and not putting their desires in line with the Prophet's, thus causing their incompleteness, at that moment Allah Almighty completed for them their development there in the grave, and so, they are very happy indeed. This happened, through Sahib-Uz-Zaman, Sayyidina Al-Mahdi, whose duty it is to complete in Barzakh what was left uncompleted in this life.

Our Grandshaykh said to me: "Oh Nazim Efendi, you and your brothers must be thankful to Allah for having the honour to be in the association of such a Grandshaykh who has been given power by his Lord to save, not only his own murids, but also any other Shaykh's murids who have fallen into the hands of devils."

I asked my Grandshaykh: "Does this apply also to the Nations of Prophets other than our Prophet, as so many from those Nations have been captured by Satan and his armies — does your power extend to them also?"

He said: "Yes, on the Last Day, that Grandshaykh will save from the hands of the devil all those of the Nations of former Prophets who did not join the assembly of their Prophets, but who stayed outside in the grip of devils and demons. That Grandshaykh has been given great authority on the Last Day."

What does it mean that every Prophet is alive; how is it so? Allah Almighty appoints for each time one person as deputy for each of the Prophets. The same mercy and spiritual emanations (Tajalli) that were present in the

time of that Prophet do not disappear but continue to be manifest. In our time, as the tajalli of our Prophet are manifested in his deputy, so it is with all of the Prophets and their deputies — one may say that it is as if there were 124,000 Prophets on the Earth.

Grandshaykh went on to say that there is always one great Wali who has, by himself, to be deputy for all 124,000 Prophets and represent all of them; this is the station of Grandshaykh, and that Grandshaykh is the representative of Sayyidina Muhammad, as all the Prophets are under his banner. Grandshaykh said: “There is always one who must hold this rank; now this station belongs to us; after me only one more should come to hold this rank before the beginning of the events of the end of time (Coming of Sayyidina Al-Mahdi). You are honoured by Allah to be in this company.”

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THE MISSION OF PROPHETS AND AWLIYA; OUR GRANDSHAYKH'S SPECIAL GUIDANCE QUALITY; A VERY GOOD MANNER

Every Saint has been granted by his Lord some miraculous powers and ranks in the Divine Presence. Every Grandshaykh is guidance for his people to their Lord, and it is the Grandshaykh's duty to make people as complete as possible. The meaning of guidance is to prepare murids for the Divine Presence. Those lacking the guidance of a teacher cannot know what they really need — they cannot distinguish between those things which are good and suitable for them, and those which are harmful for them in the Divine Presence. Everyone is in need of guidance so that he may be shown the

way to distinguish what is beneficial to him from that which is harmful. All Prophets came for that purpose. Perhaps you may say, "How can a person not know what is harmful for him; how can one not know that bad attributes are within him?" Our selfishness prevents us from realizing this; it says, "You are alright; you are the best; you must be like this; this is best for you." Your egos will even tell you that the very worst things are the best, because egos are so devilish and wild that they see themselves as being the best and everyone else as the worst. So, our selfishness likes and rushes towards all badness because this is its natural attribute.

There is a struggle going on inside of us between the ego and the soul. The ego likes to be with devils and in their evil ways. Its life is in filth and filled with dirty characteristics, and so it will never admit that its actions are bad; but it will always advertise its own cause and attempt to push down and cover our spiritual attributes so that they can't appear. The ego accomplishes this by insisting, "I and my wild characteristics are your real personality."

All Prophets came only to give people this guidance: "Oh people, you must not let yourselves be cheated by your egos — don't believe them, but look instead to what is really good." Therefore, Moses was given the miracle of his hand becoming sparkling white as he pulled it from his breast and showed it to the people — "See this shining hand; know that this world of purity and light is the real one and that your egos have been cheating you." All the Prophets came just for that purpose, but so many people, being donkeys for their egos, do not accept Moses, Jesus Christ or Muhammad, Peace be Upon All of Them. All Prophets are sent as guidance to people in order to say to them: "Be careful of your egos, for they are cheating you and causing you to fall into troubles here and in the hereafter."

After the days of the Prophets, ending with the Seal of the Prophets, our beloved Prophet Muhammad, there have come many Awliya following the ways of the Prophets and who, like them, are guides. They know the tricks of the ego very well, and because of this, so many people are running away from them, as their egos are telling them, "That person is no good, we must escape from him." Why does the ego want to escape from the Awliya so badly? Because they will show to that person the reality of his ego, will reveal to him its bad character and dirtiness. At that time, the ego Will be very displeased, as up until that time it was sitting on a throne and the person was saying to it, "Oh my Lord," but after that person finds out that the ego is not his Lord, but only his donkey, he will throw it down and make it serve him. Therefore, when people are angry at us, it is not their souls that are angry but only their donkeys.

Every Grandshaykh is given a special kind of guidance. Our Grandshaykh's special quality was that if he saw bad characteristics, he would fire upon them a heavy barrage. His batteries were always charged up for firing at the bad characteristics of anyone — be he king or workman — with great explosive shells. He did this so often, and once he said to me about it: "Oh my son, Nazim Efendi, I promised to my Lord on the Day of Promises that if I ever saw any bad characteristic in anyone that I would fire at it, and my Lord granted me that through that firing the person involved would be cleansed of that characteristic sooner or later. That firing will make that person ashamed of himself now so that on the Last Day no shame will befall him. As this is Allah's promise to me, I always shoot at whatever bad characteristics appear, knowing that in that way it shall be removed from that person. This style of guidance was given uniquely to me and it is very difficult to carry, but I was given that guidance-power (Irshad) on the Day of

Promises, and even if people become angry with me, it does not matter, as I am only doing, what I have been ordered to do.”

Grandshaykh went on to explain a second special guidance quality granted to him: “When I am sitting and speaking in my lectures about any ranks or virtues of the hereafter, the people who are attending my assembly must ultimately reach to those ranks.” Even if one’s worshipping was not adequate, he will eventually attain them because he was listening to and believing in Grandshaykh. Our Grandshaykh may take them to such ranks as he is invested with himself; he never spoke of any ranks until he had attained them himself. For example, he never spoke about Damascus until he had arrived in it; had he not known, he would not have spoken about it. This is a miracle (Karamah) of Grandshaykh, and he says: “You must be thankful to your Lord that you have reached this assembly.”

Then Grandshaykh told me about the most important good manner for believers, a good manner which is also the essence of what Shaykhs, and Tariqats are teaching. That good manner is: Not to say, “No, this is wrong”, or “Why is it like this.” To avoid thinking and saying these two phrases is the summit of good manners (Adab). When you see a person who has stopped saying “no” and “why”, you must know that he has adab with his Lord, and looks at everything which He decrees as being alright. Such a person is not going to say “no” and “why”, but instead will say, “nothing is wrong except me.” He looks to himself and says, “I am wrong, but everything happening outside of me is going according to laws and in its proper order — but, oh my ego, you are wrong.”

Contrarily, bad manners always make us say, “Everything is wrong, but I am right.” You may see

everyone doing and saying this. This is an illness of our souls which is called, “Everyone-being-pleased-with-himself.”

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ALLAH’S BOUNDLESS MERCY:
EVERYONE HAS HIS PLACE
IN PARADISE; THE BLACK
STONE: DIFFERENT LEVELS OF
UNDERSTANDING; TELESCOPES

My Grandshaykh was saying that the gates of Paradise are open for all to enter; and according to the Hadith of the Holy Prophet, Allah Almighty has parcelled out Paradise, assigning to everyone his portion, and not allowing anyone to occupy the portion that has been assigned to another. What this means is that Allah Almighty has given to His servants before they ever ask for anything, has given with a generosity that is absolute, as He doesn’t wait for us to ask that then He may give us according to our requests, He gives unbesought.

Our Grandshaykh went on to say that Allah Almighty treats His people in this life with the absolute Mercy emanating from His Divine Name Ar-Rahman (The All-Beneficent). No one can fall outside of the bounds of a mercy and a beneficence that is boundless, as is the mercy implicit in the Holy Name Ar-Rahman. Don’t ever think that the mercy oceans belonging to this Divine Name have any shore — no — they are boundless and endlessly deep, and so they ever will remain. You must know that Allah is never going to take back anything which He has granted to His servants, and that even to think such a thing is unbelief (Kufr) and the worst

thought that we can think about our Lord. Yes, our Lord gave to us all a grant never ending, and that grant is faith.

What we are listening to now of Grandshaykh's words is not knowledge of the sort that we may be accustomed to hearing — it may seem new and strange to our ears, but nonetheless it is the truth from the secrets which are opened up day by day to the Saints (Awliya). Allah Almighty granted faith to the Sons of Adam on the Day of Promises, the day when the souls of all the descendants of Adam were brought forth from his backbone and asked by their Lord: "Am I not your Lord?" We were all present on that day — looking to our Lord, talking to Him, knowing Him — and we replied:

"Yea, verily. We testify that You are our Lord."

(Surat al-A'raf, Ayat172)

That faith was granted to everyone, but Divine Wisdom decreed that in this life some people's faith would remain covered while that of others would appear. The Holy Prophet said in regard to this: "The hearts of the Sons of Adam contain treasures, and the keys to the hearts are in the Hand of our Lord." Therefore, if He is not going to open the hearts, no one can — not even His Beloved Muhammad, for whose sake the whole creation was created.

If you understand that faith is present in all of mankind, you must be very respectful towards each one of them and you must understand that only with Allah Almighty's permission are you believing and showing your faith, while someone else is not showing faith only because his Lord has not opened it up for him. You must understand the matter like this, and never say about

anyone, ‘He is an unbeliever’, — who can know what will be the state of any person at the end of his life? The key to the hearts is in the Hand of the Almighty, and what will become of each person in the end is a secret known in its entirety only to Allah Himself; even the Prophet can only know something about this matter within defined limits. On the Day of Promises, Allah Almighty granted faith to His servants, and He is not going to take it away from them — perhaps they will declare their faith upon breathing their last breath — such is Allah’s mercy. Allah Almighty is keeping and hiding so many mercy oceans which are destined for His servants.

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(A question was asked): “Mawlana, it is easy enough for me to understand how someone who dies a slow death from a long and torturous disease may have time to reflect on his life, and realizing his helplessness, believe and turn to Allah in repentance (Taubah) even though he was the most stubborn unbeliever and evildoer up until that time; but what I can’t comprehend is how someone who is, for example, shot and killed while in the act of committing a heinous crime, may attain repentance despite the suddenness of his death.”

(Sheikh Nazim replied): Allah may create time within time. The time that it takes that bullet to kill him may seem very short to us, but for that person Allah may make it a very long instant indeed, long enough for him to reflect upon his whole life and repent unto his Lord. Isn’t Allah Almighty capable of extracting a confession from His slave? — He most certainly is.

(Question): “But, Mawlana, how shall we understand all the verses of Qur’an which speak about eternal Hell with no exit?”

(Answer): Allah Almighty says in one verse of the Qur'an:

"And we don't send our verses (Ayat) except to frighten (Takhweefah)."

(Surat al-Isra, Ayat 59)

In other words, to scare the hell out of people. For example, you may say to your son, "If you don't stop doing that I will kill you!" In reality, you are never going to do any such thing, but that warning may just be sufficient to make him listen to what you are saying and to desist from that disliked action.

(Question): "Mawlana, why is it that the meanings we derive when we read the Qur'an seem to contradict the hidden meanings which you are uncovering?"

(Answer): Here I have some salt: it is a white powder that we use in most of our foods. Who could guess that it consists of two poisons that would kill whoever consumed them? Also, here we have some water — who could guess that it consists of two gases — two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen? He who knows, knows, and he who doesn't know sees only the obvious and apparent. The latter may deny, but his denial won't make him right.

Similarly, people read the Holy Qur'an and understand it on their respective levels; they may deny anything beyond their level of understanding, but their denial doesn't decrease in the least the validity of the deeper truth, truth which cannot be gained merely through outward study, but is given as a grant from the Divine Presence.

For example, Sayyidina ‘Umar said to the black stone which is part of the Holy House (Ka’bah) in Makkah: “Oh Black Stone, you are only a stone, and I would never kiss you except for the fact that I saw the Prophet kiss you; therefore, I follow his example.” That was Sayyidina ‘Umar’s level of understanding, and in following the Prophet, despite his not understanding all the Prophet’s actions, lay ‘Umar’s obedience and goodness. But the level of Abu Bakr’s understanding was deeper. We know through our Naqshbandi transmission that Abu Bakr said about the black stone that it is not just an ordinary stone, but rather a ‘stone of trusts’ (Sakhrat-ul-Amana) which contains a record of the promises that all the Sons of Adam made to their Lord on the Day of Promises, and also registers the names of all who circumambulate the Ka’bah (As one passes the stone, one may either kiss it or hold up one’s two hands and say: “In the Name of Allah, Allah is Greatest and to Allah Belongs All Praise”); it is a stone which has ears, eyes and a heart.

Different people can understand the Qur’an’s meanings according to their particular levels of faith-power: the more faith-light we have, the more understanding will be sent to us. Now, for example, astronomers examine the heavens with such gigantic telescopes that if you put your eye to them you would be knocked over. The distances that these telescopes cover are measured in light-years; I read in a magazine that a certain telescope in North America penetrates to a distance of ten-thousand million light-years — even the thought of these distances makes the mind spin. Now you are reading Qur’an just like one who looks to the skies with the naked eye and sees lots of stars there — that is your view, your knowledge — but can you imagine what kind of knowledge that gigantic telescope brings us!

Everyone is looking at the Qur'an and seeing something, but it is not what we are seeing. By means of that telescope a gigantic galaxy has been seen, and they have named it "Andromeda"; its diameter is one hundred and eighty thousand light-years and it contains three hundred billion stars, whereas our galaxy is only one hundred and twenty thousand light-years in diameter and contains only two hundred billion stars. Our gigantic sun, in comparison to some of those stars, is only like a football in comparison to the Earth. But with our eyes, that immense galaxy appears to be no more than a very small dot, a faint star which can only be seen on the darkest moonless nights by only the very keenest eyes. However, the telescopic view tells us that it is very, very big, while our eyes inform us that it is tiny: do you believe the telescope? — You must believe it. So, oceans of Allah Almighty's Knowledges are in the Qur'an and you must not try to put it in limits by saying, "This much, no more." The more faith-light you possess, the more you can take in of these knowledges; but a blind person cannot see anything at all in the skies.

We believe that the Holy Qur'an contains endless knowledge — every letter of it contains at least twenty-four thousand meanings, just as that tiny star in reality contains billions of stars. The total range of that telescope covers one-hundred billion galaxies; each of them contains billions of stars, and what lies beyond this Allah Almighty knows. The words that have come to us in the Holy Qur'an are from none other than the Creator of all this — Glory be to Him; and He holds every Son of Adam to be more precious to Him than all of those galaxies.

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CONCERNING JUDGEMENT AND THE SIXTH PILLAR; QUDRAT ALLAH

There are two ways of understanding the Holy Qur'an: one way is within the capacity of our minds, and the other way only the heart can fathom, and it is endless understanding. Up until now, we are still not speaking on the level of hearts, but only on the level of minds, so that you may become prepared for understanding more and more according to the Qur'an ayat, "And Allah is endlessly Expansive and Knowing."

Grandshaykh was saying that because Allah has granted to the Sons of Adam from His boundless mercy, if Allah Almighty asks you on the Judgement Day: "What did you do with your life?" You must say: "Oh my Lord, You left us to choose our way, You told us, 'Do as you like; if you like to believe, you may believe, and if you don't like, don't believe — you are free in every matter.' When You gave us this free choice, we did as we liked — as You said, we did — now here we are in front of You." What Grandshaykh is saying is that when Allah Almighty makes an account of everyone's actions on the Last Day, He will take into account all that He Himself pre-disposed His servants for doing and allowed them to pursue.

Everyone has a body and a soul inside of that body. Without a soul, this body belongs to the Earth, and nothing is going to emerge in the way of actions from a body without a soul. The body says, "Oh my Lord, I cannot do anything without a soul; when You send me a soul, only then may I perform actions, so in reality it is the soul that acted, not me." Then the soul will be asked to account for its actions, and it will say, "Oh my Lord, You know that I was in the Spiritual World worshipping You without ever opposing You, worshipping You before

I ever came to this body. How can I be a sinner when I am but an emanation from Your Divine Light Rays? How can there be sin or darkness for me when I am all light?”

Grandshaykh is explaining that this baffling interaction of earthen body and pure soul can be understood as a manifestation of Divine Power (Qudrat Allah). To illustrate this point, we may look at how the striking together of flint and iron produces a spark of fire: is the fire in the flint or in the iron? Where is it? When you strike the two together you get fire, but you can't say that the fire is hidden either in the flint or in the iron. What you can say is that the fire is coming from Qudrat Allah. The same Divine Power that causes the spark to appear from the striking together of those two materials also causes our actions to appear from the marriage of body and soul, as Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

“And Allah created you and that which you do.”

(Surat as-Saffat, Ayat 96)

This means that He created you and created your actions as well — those actions appear through the Lord's Divine Power.

The sixth pillar of faith (Iman) is the belief that Allah has already determined all that will happen in this world in the way of goodness and badness alike. Perhaps someone will say, “If this pillar is true, what real responsibility do I have for my actions that would cause Allah to put me in Hell?” The answer is that Allah gives power to His people to do good and bad actions — some He chose for virtue and some for evil. He created Paradise and Hell, and the people of each are acting;

they must see the results of those works on the Day of Judgement. You must not be in doubt concerning your Lord's justice, thinking that He will put you in Hell. His justice is Absolute Justice, and you must know that evil-doing people are already staggering under the weight of the heavy burdens of their badness, and you must thank Allah Almighty that they are carrying those burdens, for otherwise you would be carrying them. We must be intercessors on the Day of Judgement for those people; Allah will grant authority to so many people on that day to intercede for those who carried heavy burdens of sin.

‘Abdul-Wahhab Ash-Sha’rani, a famous Scholar and Sufi of Egypt, was praying to Allah to have mercy on prostitutes, saying: “Most Merciful Lord, those prostitutes are like a huge wall, a great barrier that keeps the honour of ladies. They put themselves forward as a buffer in front of honourable ladies, keeping animal-men away from them; if not for those prostitutes, bad men, like big donkeys, would rush upon honourable ladies also; but those women make themselves available, putting themselves forward, so that those men come to them, and thus honour is protected — so please grant Your mercy to those women.”

So many people are carrying such heavy burdens, and we must look at their situations with the eye of wisdom, or else we will be in the stable with donkeys; if we aren't satisfied being in that stable, we may climb up, up, up. This is only one drop from the secrets of the Holy Qur'an, one ray coming from the Sun of Divine Predestination (Qadr).

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THE MURID'S TOTAL SUBMISSION TO HIS GUIDE WILL TRAIN HIM TO KEEP HIS FAITH IN SEVERE TRIALS

Our Grandshaykh's advice to everyone is that they must look for a holy person who may guide them to their Lord's Way. He stresses, furthermore, that this is an obligation for every believer, and that once the seeker has found his guide, the most important point for him as a follower is always to firmly believe that his guide is absolutely right and correct in his actions. You must believe in your guide, must believe that he knows at least fifty times more than you; your having this attitude is a necessary condition for his being able to guide you. If you think that he knows, feels or looks at things the way that you do, then you will never be able to derive any benefit nor receive any guidance from that person.

Real spiritual guides are inheritors of the Prophets and in spiritual contact with them. It is a well-known fact about Prophets that they had extraordinary powers and characteristics that enabled them to serve as guides for people to their Lord's Divine Presence. You must know that whatever is the number of people in a Prophet's Nation, and be it millions or billions, that Prophet must know at least that number of times more than any of his people may know. You can only know for yourself, but a Prophet must know for his whole Nation, so that he can complete his Prophethood by means of them. Because of the spiritual connection that real guides have with the Prophet, and by virtue of their being his inheritors, they also have such extraordinary powers and characteristics which enable them to know at least fifty times more than we know.

The most important thing for a seeker (Murid) who follows a guide (Murshid) in order to move toward the

Divine Presence, is to understand that his guide is going to try him time and again. The Murshid has been ordered by the Prophet to try his murids, and everyone knows that a trial is not an easy thing — or else it isn't a trial. When a Murshid tries his murid, he sends toward him some trial in which that murid can see no Divine Wisdom at all. Perhaps he orders something which the mind of that murid cannot accept and protests against loudly to itself: "It is not right to do this; why does he order me to do such a thing?" If the murid should openly express such rebelliousness to his Shaykh, or if it just comes to his heart without him even letting anyone know about it, the Divine Power between him and his Shaykh is cut — like a blown fuse; he is then stuck at that level and unable to progress.

Grandshaykh says: "For a murid to rebel, either openly or secretly, against his Shaykh is as terrible as someone cursing the Prophets; it is abominable to think bad thoughts about one's own guide. One's changing of heart in relation to his Shaykh is like cursing the Prophets, for if not for your guide you are never going to reach to knowledge of the Prophet's realities." Therefore, a follower must have utmost respect for his Murshid, not only in what he expresses, but also in What he conceals in his heart.

This is a training for believers so that they may learn to always keep respect in their hearts for the Prophet, and never to object in any way to anything that the Prophet did in the way of actions and judgements. If someone says, regarding the Prophet, "This action of his was totally correct, but that one not so much," then immediately the power is cut between the Prophet and that person, and the connection is in need of being re-established.

Ultimately, this training is essential in enabling

us to keep our faith and to become real slaves of the Almighty, as in the course of our lives so many strange, terrible and unthinkable events may occur causing people's hearts to be disturbed, and many will say, "What is this, is this justice?" So many people are asking this question nowadays, when, according to the understanding of their minds, there is no justice and no mercy in certain events — this is unbelief. If a person believes in his Lord, he must believe that his Lord is always guiding events in the most excellent of ways, and that in everything that happens you may find the Lord's absolute Mercy and Justice.

If you do not accept training at the hands of a Murshid, you won't be able to tolerate many events, which are happening all around you in this life, but over which you can exercise no control whatsoever. If you are going to object to the occurrence of these events, you are, in effect, accusing Allah of wrong judgement and injustice. Therefore, every believer must first be trained at the hands of a Murshid; then, when he has stopped saying, 'No', and 'Why', in relation to his Shaykh, the perfume of good actions will begin to issue forth from that murid. What this means is that you will not find any objection in a real believer to what his Lord decrees, nor can you witness any breach of manners toward the Lord. He says: "Oh my Lord, You are right, I am wrong; oh my Prophet, you are right, I am wrong; oh my Grandshaykh, you are right, I am wrong." This is the peak and the perfume of good manners and actions; whoever obtains these characteristics will improve more rapidly than anyone else.

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The trials that come to us from our Shaykh will be much lighter trials than those coming from the Prophet, and the trials that the Prophet sends will, in turn, be

much easier trials than the ones sent by Allah Almighty — and you must be ready for your Lord’s trial, then you will be alright — not before. When you can say, “What my Lord decrees is right, and what I might desire contrary to that is wrong,” you have attained the highest degree of good manners with your Lord (Adab). All Prophets have been sent in order to teach this point.

How can a person really believe in his Lord when he sometimes objects, saying that his Lord is not performing the best of possible actions? A person has really overcome this pitfall and attained to real faith when he can wholeheartedly say, “Allah knows best what is good for His creatures, the Prophet knows what is best for his Nation and the Murshid for his followers — we can be wrong, but they can’t.” When he can always accuse himself in this manner, it means that he has attained the first station of faith (Iman).

The basic and common level for man is to be at all times one with his ego, and when man is one with his ego, he is in the darkness of unbelief (Kufr). People on that level may be heard saying, “I am just fine, but the problem is with the others — they are all wrong.” As long as a person is on that level, he will never accept a guide or believe in a Prophet; how should he, when he thinks that he knows everything better than anyone else? He is under the control of the commanding-self, the lower self that commands one to do evil (An-nafs ul-ammara bis-suu), and as long as he is under its command he will remain on the level of unbelief.

When one climbs from that level to the second level, he improves to the awakening of the self-accusing self (An-nafs ul-lawwamah); once awakened, that self always makes the person see himself as being blameworthy, and accuse himself by saying, “You are wrong, oh my ego.” At that stage he will seek some guide to show him what is

right, as he has recognized that his ego is always wrong; its praying is wrong, its fasting wrong, its almsgiving wrong and its pilgrimage is wrong — nothing is right because he is not right, not yet purified from the tyranny of his lower self. Once he has accepted the fact that his ego is preventing him from doing any goodness, he is ready to accept a guide to lead him to real goodness, and at that point he is prepared to be a follower; even if his guide tries him severely, he will say, “I am wrong, he is right.” When a person has reached this point, he has attained the first level of real faith (Haqiqi Iman).

All different kinds of situations may befall a person during his life. One may encounter both goodness and badness, and indeed it may be one’s lot to have to suffer the most troublesome and harmful events. Whenever such events befall one, the sign of real faith is one’s being able to put up with them — for example, to eat an unliked food (unliked by the ego, not by the Divine Law); to see, hear or come in contact with something one detests. In all these cases, one must be able to keep hold of oneself without flinching, without undergoing any change within oneself and without saying, “This is wrong and I am right.” This is steadfastness, a sign of real faith.

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(A question was asked): “Mawlana, so many of our brothers in Islam can understand, and will readily agree that everything Allah Almighty and His Prophet ordered in the way of Divine Laws (Shariah) is perfect, totally acceptable and applicable to all times; but what they have a very difficult time understanding is that even the bad things which people do against the Shariah are also taking place in accordance with Divine Will and Order.”

(Answer): That is because they are struggling with their minds' understanding, but still have not understood that they must look at the final outcome of those disliked events — that bitterness is only the initial taste, while sweetness is the lasting taste. Therefore we can't judge events, but must be patient for their fruits which will appear in the end.

An important point is that Allah left His people free to do anything but ordered them to do good actions and to desist from bad actions and unbelief. They may either obey or disobey, and the Lord says: "I don't approve of your bad actions." We, as servants of Allah, believe that everything happens only through His Will, and although He may try His people severely, we shall never raise any objections; but we shall never approve of either our own ego's or anyone else's bad actions. When we are looking at bad actions, we must look first at those of our own ego, before regarding those of others, as, according to the Prophet's order, everyone must be occupied with his own faults, and only when he has eliminated all of them may he look to other people in order to help them eliminate their faults and incompleteness's.

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THE POWER OF REAL FAITH: WHEN NO ONE BUT ALLAH IS WATCHING...

Our Grandshaykh is explaining to us what the power of real faith is and how strong it may be. He said that the power of real faith is such a power that would enable a man to be stranded alone on a desert island for forty days with a very beautiful girl without any indecent thought entering his heart in relation to that girl — the power of real faith would bar him from even considering a forbidden act with her. The presence or

absence of purity of heart will become evident in such a trial. One may ask if such purity is within the capacity of the human being — purity that would prevent the normal animal urges from even entering the mind of a man alone with an attractive woman for such a long period of time. The answer to this question is, of course, yes: what if that girl was your daughter or sister, would it not then be natural for even any normal man to be free of lustful intentions concerning that girl? For a man of real faith, that female stranger is no different than his daughter or sister — his heart is spotlessly clean.

You may ask yourself how you would stand up to the following trial: You are walking down the street of your hometown, along a dark alley in the middle of the night, when suddenly a door opens and a very beautiful lady calls you to come inside; it is twelve o'clock midnight, and nobody is watching what you will do. What is your ego going to lead you into? Will you fear Allah and leave her, or will you be pushed by your ego into doing a dirty action? If you can keep yourself in such a moment as this, then you may know that you are a real believer in your Lord; for in such a situation you would believe that no one is looking except your Lord, and your fear would be of Him alone, thus making that action acceptable in the Divine Presence.

We vowed on the Day of Promises (the day before our creation when all the souls were taken in front of their Lord and asked to recognize their Creator and promise their loyalty unto Him) to Keep our faith in this manner; not to behave any differently whether there would be witnesses looking on or not. Now, here, in the presence of so many people, if a lovely lady were to walk in, you wouldn't look — you'd be ashamed to look; but if no one else were here, would there be any change in your behaviour? If so, then you haven't yet attained to real faith. A real believer is always with his Lord, always

aware of his Lord's Presence with him — but it is not easy to reach this level. One may, however, more easily control oneself if one has a guide, and feels his presence alongside him, guiding him, not going away. When a person says, "This is my guide," then he believes that that person has the power to be with him all the time; if you can feel your Murshid with you always, it will give you power so that you will be able to feel your Lord's Presence with you. In this way Tariqats are leading people to real faith — May Allah Almighty grant us that real faith, too!

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PATIENCE IS THE KEY, AND ONLY FAITH WILL YIELD IT

My Grandshaykh is instructing us on the importance of being patient in the face of every disliked thing and saying that it is a most important practice for everyone to keep in his life. Don't run in panic every time some disliked thing happens to you. Not to panic and not to lose one's head are the most important and useful abilities anyone can have in our times. So many great and terrible events may occur suddenly, and you must not lose your cool; you must stand firm in the face of every terrible and gigantic event and hold them far away from you. What can give us this much needed characteristic? — A strong belief, faith. Without faith, you won't be able to keep yourself standing firmly, only strong faith will keep you together.

Now, in these days, people will taste of terrible events and they are most in need of such strong faith. Grandshaykh was advising us that whenever such an unliked event appears, you must be ready to face it; it is your duty to face it. You must know that every

time you confront such an event with steadfastness you are improving spiritually, moving powerfully and deliberately towards your destination; and the more trying the event, the more quickly you are propelled to your destination. “Oh my sons”, says Grandshaykh, “Oh my people, you must know that every goodness is going to appear through your patience in the face of disliked actions or events; every goodness and real knowledge will spring from your patience. The Knowledge of Certainty (Ilm-ul-Yaqin), the Sight of Certainty (‘Ain-ul-Yaqin) and Truth of Certainty (Haqq-ul-Yaqin) will all appear through facing these unliked events with patience.” That patience is the key which opens up the treasures for the Sons of Adam, and all those who stand firmly in the face of trials and are patient, they will be given the keys to their treasures.

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THE REAL HONOUR OF MANKIND: IBRAHIM BIN ADHAM’S AWAKENING; DEFENDING OUR IMAN AGAINST ITS ENEMIES

We are beginning a new lecture, a lecture of which we may be in great need at all times. Our Grandshaykh was saying that he is always awakening people. People are all asleep, not in the sense of bodily sleep, but in that they are shutting their eyes and preventing themselves from seeing the facts and the Divine Wisdom in their lives. That is why we say that they are sleeping.

Prophets and Saints are called upon to awaken people, saying: “Oh people, don’t be cheated and deceived by the pleasures of this life, for they will make you blind to the facts and Divine Wisdoms you are in need of. Oh

people, you must know that you didn't come to this life just for eating, drinking and dancing; if this is all you want out of life, then you and the animals are on the same level. But you must not stop at this, you must go on and up; there are so many levels you can find through your soul — don't waste your precious lives in activities in the pursuit of which the animals are superior to you!"

Once there lived a great and majestic king in Central Asia, Ibrahim bin Adham; his was the Kingdom of Balkh, and he was a very rich and powerful king. He was so rich, our Grandshaykh was saying, that he had 12,000 shepherd dogs guarding his flocks. Each dog wore a golden chain with a golden plate attached to it, reading: 'Property of the King'. You can't imagine how great were his flocks of sheep and herds of cattle!

One day, this king was out hunting, and he was just chasing after a gazelle on horseback, when suddenly he heard a voice coming from his saddle, saying to him: "Oh King, is this what you were created for? Have you been ordered to do this?" That question gave him such a start that he awakened: he stopped what he was doing and remembered his Lord, then he returned to his palace and turned away from his kingship and from every pleasure in this life. He had understood that he was not created for the pleasures of hunting and worldly enjoyments, and he turned to his Lord to find out what it was he had been created for. He became one of the greatest Awliya of all times.

Now, that same question that Ibrahim heard coming from his saddle might be asked of any of us who is thinking that he was only created for the purpose of eating, drinking and sex-enjoyment. Only upon leaving that level may one reach the level of mankind. This is important for everyone to know so that they may strive for that honour of reaching real humanity; it is a

difficult practice, not easy, but we must gain that real honour. We are sitting here speaking on this point, and Grandshaykh's lectures were always directed towards the goal of enabling his followers to reach that highest honour of belonging to true mankind. Why are we concentrating so much on this point? — Because whoever attains true humanity will enter the Divine Presence, where he will know Divine Pleasures and Favours from his Lord and will attain endless peace and satisfaction with his Lord; therefore, our Grandshaykh was saying, as all of the Prophets said: "Oh people, you must believe in these realities and pursue Divine Wisdom in this life."

The Sons of Adam may be seen walking in two different ways: some of them are believing in and seeking the Absolute Truth, while others are not believing and not asking to be anything more than what they are; they say, "It is good enough for us to be on the same level as animals; we are not in need of believing in anything, and we are believing only in this life and trying to derive more and more pleasure from eating, drinking, dancing and sex." These are the unbelievers (Kafiroon).

The first group are believers, but it is not enough for believers merely to believe, but they must prepare themselves — for there are so many enemies waiting to ambush the believer — they are: The Ego or Lower Self (Nafs), Satan the accursed devil (Shaytan), Vain Desires (Hawa), and this Life's Pleasures along with the unbelieving people who run after them (Ad-dunya wa-Ahluhu). So a believer must be very vigilant in guarding his faith and beliefs, as they are the most precious things he has, giving him everything in this life and the next. With faith we may improve so as to attain the highest degrees in the Divine Presence; and if we hope to be able to keep that faith, we must learn how we can defend it in the face of the attacks of our enemies; the best way of doing this is to not merely preserve it at its present

level, but to strengthen it always and put it safely out of reach of the hands of our enemies.

Grandshaykh was teaching us how we can put our faith in safety and strengthen it: in facing unliked events a believer must keep his heart, keep his faith and keep his balance — this is very important. He is like a tight rope walker, he must be very careful not to lose his balance; if he leans over just a little too far, he will fall. Likewise, a believer must move through difficulties with perfect composure. Those unliked events knock the faith out of so many people, they are falling out of faith but not feeling it. You will lose your faith if you are not careful.

You must know that every event, whether likeable or unlikeable, happens by His Will. You must not look at it as coming from people around you, rather, you must realize that the original Cause is Allah Almighty, no need to look for causes after Him.

Grandshaykh says that every time you look to the secondary cause, you are mistaken and have fallen down from faith in your Lord. For example, you may be walking down the street when a football hits you on the head, knocking off your turban. If you look back to see who hit your head with that football, you fall down from the level of real faith. Why did you look back? Do you not know that the initial cause is your Lord, and that whoever kicked that ball at you is only a secondary cause? What do you have to do with a secondary cause when you know the origin of all causes? If you are a real believer in your Lord, then why are you angry with that boy and looking back to see who struck you with that football, in order to quarrel with him and make trouble (Fitna)? If you continue walking, then there will be no quarrel, no fitna, no badness springing up; therefore, one of the main desirable results of being patient in the face

of unliked things is that it promotes peace in the world among its people. We must practice holding our tempers and being patient, for every time we are successful, the way of real faith is opened up to us.

This is a most important thing for believers: they must keep their positions firmly like a mountain: winds and typhoons may be coming at it from every side, since the beginning of Creation, wishing to push the mountain out of its place; but the mountain stands firm, unyielding. And in like manner, a believer must keep his position, unwavering, even though unliked events shower on him from all sides. A believer will always hold to his faith, prepared to regard Allah Almighty as the first cause of anything that befalls him. This is a sign of real faith. If someone is only pleased in the event of good happenings, and displeased with disagreeable events, then his is not real faith.

Our Grandshaykh gives us an example in the following story: Once upon a time there was a man who went walking through his grounds followed by his slave. When they reached a certain place in the gardens where cucumbers were growing, that man cut a cucumber from its vine, tasted it, and finding it bitter, gave it to the servant. The servant ate the whole cucumber. Then his master asked him: "Oh my slave, you ate that cucumber, did you not find it bitter?" The slave replied: "Yes, master it was." "Then how could you eat it?" "Oh my lord," the slave then said, "I have received so many favours from your generous hand and so many tasty foods, that it makes me ashamed to refuse something when for once it is not tasteful." Then his master turned to him and said: "Oh my slave, you have gained your release, you are free now, go as you please."

This is a short tale, but for everyone there is a big lesson contained in it, as to how we should behave with

our Lord. It is a very high good manner, if you have that you are very fortunate, and you have attained God's pardon. If you are pleased with your Lord, your Lord will be pleased with you; when you are not pleased with your Lord, your Lord will also not be pleased with you.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF EVERYONE'S HIDDEN APTITUDE (AHLIYYA): A STORY, THE DAY THE SAHABA DECIDED TO SLEEP IN; IT IS USELESS TO DEPEND ON ONE'S OWN ACTIONS OR WORSHIPPINGS

My Grandshaykh said that the Holy Prophet never gained any rank through his devotions or actions. As a proof of this, Grandshaykh quoted a tradition (Hadith) of the Holy Prophet: "Oh Allah, don't leave me to my works, my actions, my devotions even for the time it takes to blink an eye — or less than that." This Hadith indicates that the Prophet never depended on his own works and devotions, but always hoped for Allah's causeless mercy, and that his rank was not a result of any actions on his part. Grandshaykh added, "Even if Allah Almighty was going to recompense the Prophet for his devotions, the Prophet would not accept that. How could he, the Prophet, accept a payment when even members of his Nation (Ummah) of lesser rank than him — Saints and sincere believers — would never accept any payment or recompense for their acts of worship; in fact, no real believer would accept anything, because he is worshipping purely to gain his Lord's pleasure."

Grandshaykh says that Allah Almighty has given

to each person a nature suitable for a certain rank (Fitra). For example, you have a competence (Ahliyya) for the Naqshbandi Way; no one can in any way change or alter that competence — it has to appear. Just as different seeds have different unalterable natures hidden within them, so each Son of Adam has a distinct aptitude granted to him by his Lord, granted according to the Divine Will alone, and at all times independent of our actions and devotions. Sooner or later everyone's aptitude must appear; don't be hopeless because those qualities may now yet be hidden, for you must know that at any time Allah Almighty decrees, those qualities will appear, and that appearance will not be connected in any way to our actions or devotions but will be purely a grant from Him Almighty. These words lead us to new horizons of understanding and open up vast areas of inner wisdom to explore — these good tidings should fill us with contentment.

Shah Naqshband said: "In our view, one's having the competence for this Tariqat is more important a fact than his being a Muslim or Believer." Why? — Because that capability which Allah Almighty has granted us is what is important, then, with our actions Islam and Iman will appear. But that secret capability from Allah Almighty is most important.

You may do all the good actions asked of you by Islam and Iman, but that capability which you have been granted is more important to Allah; therefore, the Prophet's Hadith says: "Allah is not looking to our outward actions, but to our hearts." With His looking to our hearts, that worthy-nature is going to be ever more inundated with divine lights — more beautiful and complete. But we are merely doing good actions with our bodies, while the heart and its movements in relation to its Lord are much more important.

The importance of that worthy-nature and of our realizing it is expressed by the following story: Once the Holy Prophet was addressing his companions after the night-time prayer (Isha) saying: “Oh my companions, it is the same for every one of you whether he prays and does good actions or not, because the ranks that Allah Almighty has granted to you are neither going to decrease nor increase — the ink of pre-destiny has dried, and what He has granted you must reach you — no more and no less — no matter what you do...”

What was the reply of the companions? — All of them said, “Oh Prophet, if it is like that, why then do we tire ourselves out and inflict suffering upon ourselves with all these devotions and good actions? Why do we get up on cold nights and come to the mosque from far distances in the darkness? Why do we forsake our wives’ loving embraces every morning to come here? From now on we shall not come here so early to pray but shall remain with our wives in hot beds; this is very good news for us.” The Prophet replied: “You are free to do as you like; come or don’t come — no one is forcing you.”

That night they left the mosque with the intention of staying comfortably in their beds the next morning. When the last part of the night had begun to show signs of giving way to the oncoming dawn, Bilal, the Prophet’s muezzin, began to recite devotional poetry from the minaret, as was his habit in the morning before calling to the prayer (Adhan), in order to awaken people in ample time for coming to the mosque. On this particular morning, as soon as he started reciting, all of the companions awoke with a start. They said to themselves, “We told the Prophet that we won’t be coming this morning; we must remain in our beds.” However, in spite of themselves, they threw aside their blankets, sprang from their beds, made ablutions (Wudu) and hurried off to the prayer.

When the Prophet entered the mosque that morning, he looked around and saw that it was full of worshippers, then he said: “Oh people, oh my companions, you intended something last night, and were firm in your resolve — what happened to you that made you come when you said that you wouldn’t?” They replied: “We swear to Allah that when we heard the call to prayer, our beds became like thorn bushes or as beds of nails, and lying in them was like lying on fire — we couldn’t remain there even for one moment, so we jumped, out and hastened to answer the call to prayer.”

The Prophet, Peace be Upon Him, then said: “Every creature may find ease only in behaving according to his particular competence (Ahliyya). It is that ahliyya, that worthy-nature which Allah put in your hearts, that made you move from your beds despite the intention to the contrary which you made last night. Everyone is born with the nature of Islam (Fitra), and in his deepest heart is always yearning to re-discover that nature; this secret is inside every Son of Adam, and this is what made you get up.”

For these reasons, the Prophet was in no way afraid that his companions would really leave worship because of having learned those truths. Also, inheritors of the Prophet are not afraid to reveal some truths to their followers, because that hidden nature which Allah put in your hearts will make you do, make you come despite your desires.

Grandshaykh also says that if the Prophet declared that his worshipping was as nothing and that he never could depend upon it — how can we depend upon ours? If two prostrations of the Prophet’s devotions were put in a scale and weighed up against the combined devotions of the Nations, his two prostrations would be heavier, and if his declaring the Unity of Allah once (La ilaha

illallah) was weighed up against the sins of all the Sons of Adam, it would destroy all of those sins. From this you can understand what the power and rank of our Prophet is in the Divine Presence.

Neither our Prophet nor any other Prophet is in need of sacrificing himself in the way the Christians claim that Jesus Christ made himself a sacrificial lamb for Allah or for the sake of his Nation; this is a shameful thing to say. It is enough to say once ‘La ilaha illallah’, no need for human sacrifice. When Allah Almighty, desiring to try His servant, ordered Abraham to sacrifice his son, at the last moment, He withdrew His order for the slaughter and sent a ram down from the Heavens instead. So how is He going to make Jesus Christ a lamb, an offering for the sins of the world? This is a very ugly and unfounded claim.

The Last Prophet and all Prophets before him were given Divine Powers with which to guide people to the straight path — no need for them to be lambs for Nations.

Despite the high value of our Prophet’s devotions, he does not depend upon them and awaits no payment for them from Allah, but he performs them only for Allah’s good pleasure — that is his goal. Everyone may ask at this, “What use is our worshipping, our acting?” No one can do any worship that is suitable for our Majestic Lord. No one can worship his Lord as He deserves to be worshipped — beside His Greatness all is as nothing — but we have been ordered, and so we are carrying out those orders.

Then Grandshaykh quoted Sayyidina ‘Ali, who said regarding ladies: “Nothing good comes from them, but no one can live without them.” ‘Ali’s wife, the Prophet’s daughter Fatima, said to ‘Ali: “We are like roses, from time to time you must smell them, otherwise you are

useless.” “Similarly,” says Grandshaykh, “nothing is coming from our worship — it is useless — useless, that is, for giving adequate respect to our Majestic Lord; it is impossible to give absolute respect with such worshipping, but as we have been ordered, so we must do — and whether useless or not, we cannot depend upon it.”

This is a reality that one must be aware of, and when you understand this point it will prevent you from becoming proud of your devotions, and that is very important, as whoever becomes proud of his devotions falls down, like Satan. The very worst thing for a servant is to look at himself and say: “Oh, how good I am, I am such an obedient servant of my Lord!” and to look at others, saying, “Look at them, they don’t do any worshipping, but we do!”

We have been ordered to build ladders to the moon — builders of skyscrapers are puffed up with pride over their accomplishments and look down with disdain to the people on the ground, saying: “Oh you lazy people, we have already reached to the sky while you are still like miserable little ants on the ground.” They may say this, but no matter how high they build their skyscrapers, even if they pile stone upon stone eternally, they will never reach the moon in that way — it is impossible. What is important is to listen to the orders of Allah Almighty and to obey them as best we can, and although we will never reach the moon, perhaps we may be better than one who doesn’t try, because we carry out orders, and it is better to try even if we know that ultimate success is impossible to attain in this manner — we must do it out of respect for the Lord. In every religion, every Prophet came to teach us this point.

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ONLY ONE RAY OF THE EFFULGENT SOUL COMES TO THE FORMS IN THIS WORLD

We are listening to what Saints (Awliya) are saying to us, and every one of their words is giving power to our hearts and making them firm; just as a blacksmith strikes metal with a hammer in order to make that metal stronger, so we are receiving strength from the words of Saints. Perhaps you may say that it will be forgotten or “lost on you”, but you must know that you aren’t merely a physical body, but a spiritual soul — and that the soul is functioning in a way contrasting absolutely to the functioning of the body. On the physical plane you may be heedless, but your soul is always active, even while you are asleep — that is why, in paradise, when the physical body is no more and only the soul is in existence, there will be no sleep — at that time our souls’ power will appear. Now our bodies lie down to rest, and our souls’ leave the bodies to their rest and go on their own ways, leaving behind in those bodies only one guardian to look after everything — a ‘night watch-man’, so to speak — but apart from that thin connection, the souls move away from the limited domain of our waking state during the time of sleep.

And so, when we sit and listen in such a holy meeting to blessed words, those words must affect our souls, and you may perceive it or not. For example, who feels this tape-recorder writing on the cassette? — Likewise our souls’ recording is always working.

Where were we before coming to this world? — In the spiritual world. What were we doing there? No one knows. Souls are never in need of eating, drinking, sleeping or anything that the body is in need of. They have been created in a time no one knows the beginning

of, and from that time on our souls have been swimming in Allah Almighty's power Oceans, dwelling in the world of Allah's power Kingdoms (Malakoot).

So, what reaches the body? It is impossible for the body to carry or withstand the power of the soul; if it were to try, it would melt. What reaches the Earth from the Sun? Only its rays. The Sun is in the Heavens, but its rays reach us on the Earth; if the Sun's rays were not reaching to the Earth, there could be no more life here, finished. Life depends on the Sun; so, when the Sun will be rolled up, as the Qur'an prophesies, there will be no more life on Earth; but, if the Sun were to come even one step closer to it, life would no more be possible on the face of the Earth. In the same way, the real souls of the Sons of Adam are eternally in the Divine Presence since the time of their creation — never budging from there — but one single ray is coming to our bodies.

The Angel Gabriel (Jibril) is the carrier of Divine messages to Prophets: whomever Gabriel visits, that man is a Prophet. For some of the Prophets, he came just once — and that was enough to make that man a Prophet. Every time Gabriel comes to a Prophet, it gives more honour, guidance and safety to that Prophet, and power to his Nation. Apart from Sayyidina Muhammad, the Prophet who was most frequently visited by the Angel was Sayyidina Musa (Moses), whom the Angel came to a total of four hundred times. Upon the Prophet Muhammad, the Angel descended twenty-four thousand times in twenty-three years. From this fact, we can begin to understand the honour given to him. Every Prophet knew, and testified to the fact that the Universe was only created for the sake of the Last Prophet, the Seal of the Prophets, Muhammad, Peace be Upon Him, and if one considers that even one visit from the Angel Gabriel was enough to make a man a Prophet, how great is the honour and Prophethood of one whom the Angel came

to see 24,000 times! And yet there are still so many religious people in the world who deny his Prophethood.

One day Gabriel came to the Holy Prophet Muhammad in the form of a human being, and on that occasion all the companions of the Prophet were present and able to behold him with their very eyes — this is a historical event recorded in all well-known books of Hadith. The Prophet was sitting in the mosque with his companions, when Gabriel entered in the form of a very unusual looking person: having a jet black beard and an equally dark head of hair and wearing unimaginably white garments; and the most amazing thing of all was that nowhere on him was a single speck of dust. All of the companions were overwhelmed by the appearance of that person, as they had never seen him nor anyone the least bit like him before. He went and sat down right in front of the Prophet and began asking him questions. We are not going to go into detail about those questions now, but what seemed very strange to the companions was that this man asked the Prophet questions like a teacher quizzing his pupil in order to see if he has learned his lessons, and when the prophet answered each of the questions correctly, the man answered, “Yes, you are right, good, correct,” and went on with his questioning. When he had finished his question-and-answer session, he got up and left the mosque.

The Prophet sent ‘Umar after him and told him to look where this man was going, Sayyidina ‘Umar ran out quickly to follow the unknown visitor. In front of the mosque there was a wide open space, a flat plain devoid of trees or buildings. ‘Umar looked and looked, to the right, to the left, everywhere, but there was no trace of anyone, he had disappeared. At that time, there were yet no planes or helicopters that could have whisked a man away quickly out of sight, so how could he have gotten away? Also, how could his beard have been so

black and his clothes so white if he had come through hundreds of miles of dusty desert?

So, ‘Umar came back to the Prophet saying, “Oh Rasulallah, I could not find him anywhere; that man was not from among the residents of Madinah — he came from nowhere and he quickly disappeared again into the same: He must have gone up or down! It is impossible!” At that the Prophet smiled and said: “Do you know who he was? He was Gabriel, come to teach you the basis of your religion with his questions about Islam, Faith (Iman), and Higher Goodness (Ihsan).”

In like manner, a number of times the companions saw Gabriel in a human form. The question could easily be asked: “How could Gabriel be in the form of a man when we know that twice the Prophet saw him in his original form consisting of six hundred wings that would crowd out East and West were he to spread them — how can he be contained in the body of man?” The answer is that Gabriel always remains in his original form in the Divine Presence, and when he has been ordered, he sends one ray of his power which appears in the shape of a person, without his ever leaving his original station or ceasing his Invocation of his Lord (Tasbih); at the same time he is complete in that world and also here, giving his messages to the Prophets as he was sent and ordered to do.

In the same way, the Sons of Adam never leave the Divine Presence; we stay there in our original soul-forms, and only one ray is coming from the soul to our shapes in this world.

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THE STORY OF HOW ‘ALI CONFOUNDED THE PHILOSOPHERS; AND WHAT JESUS READ ON THE TOMBSTONE OF A KING

Our Grandshaykh once told me a tale about the Prophet’s cousin, Sayyidina ‘Ali: One day, during the time of his Khalifate, there came to ‘Ali twenty-five philosophers. Every kind of knowledge must have a foundation upon which that science is built; all, that is, except philosophy. There is no base upon which philosophy may be said to be built, and among philosophers you cannot find two who will be in agreement — even within himself each philosopher is a bundle of contradictions: when he is young he says one thing, and then, when he grows old, he sings an altogether different tune; in the daytime, one frame of mind, and at night another; one mood and the accompanying set of views for the summer, and by the time the winter has closed in, he negates all that he thought in the summer; one sort of utterance when he is hungry, and a new philosophy on life when his belly is full.

Thus, as has easily been shown, these philosophers are full of many contradictions even within themselves; their philosophy is without basis, and I don’t even call it ‘knowledge’. Some no-mind people are now speaking of ‘Islamic Philosophy’, and that sort of talk is sufficient for us to confirm their lack of understanding of Islam: Islam is based on the firmest base of reality, and that is a base upon which one may build, while those philosophical systems are based on nothing but thin air. In Islam there is reality, not philosophy.

All of those twenty-five philosophers who came to Sayyidina ‘Ali were very learned men — knowing much

from the Torah, Psalms and Gospel, but not believing in any of it. They said: “We have come to debate you, and our first statement in this debate is that according to our judgement, you Muslims are all very foolish people, because you believe in Allah, the Judgement Day (Yaum-ul-Qiyamah) and Divine Predestination (Qada). You impose heavy burdens upon yourselves and can’t live as you would like to live. You have set up so many limitations and you are imprisoning yourselves within them — you are living in prison voluntarily.”

‘Ali asked them: “What is your method in life?” They answered: “Our way is to live free, to not restrict ourselves within any bounds; we have freewill and exercise it as we wish.” (In our times, there are many people, especially in the Western countries, who say exactly the same things — that they live without any restrictions. I say to them: Out-of-bounds people may live happily in jungles with the wild animals — not with other people.)

Sayyidina ‘Ali replied to them: “Oh my Lord’s servants, I address you as my Lord’s servants, even though you deny being anyone’s servants; because in my view you are all servants of my Lord, and your denial doesn’t alter this fact in the least: in reality you are all His servants. I have listened to all you had to say, but I can’t accept it. I have only one question to ask you, by the answer of which it will, inshaAllah, become clear who is foolish and who is wise.”

During the lifetime of the Prophet, ‘Ali never hastened to self-willed actions; for example, he never grabbed for his sword asking the Prophet for permission to kill misguided and disrespectful people who came to argue with and criticize the Prophet, as Sayyidina ‘Umar had often done when faced with such insolent people. Because he followed the Holy Prophet to the

extent of becoming his ‘perfect shadow’, ‘Ali was able to incorporate the Prophet’s wisdom and his inimitable patience and forbearance. He had absorbed Sayyidina Muhammad’s, character to such a degree that the Prophet said regarding ‘Ali: “I am the City of Knowledge and ‘Ali is the Gate.” This is why, when his turn came to lead the Nation in place of the Holy Prophet, he was able to deal correctly with such people as these philosophers.

Then those people were waiting for ‘Ali to ask his question, and what he asked them was this: “Will there come a day when we and you shall be equal?” They replied, “Yes, there will come such a day; on the day we die, we shall all become equal to one another.” ‘Ali replied: “Yes, the day my question was referring to is the day of our deaths, as everyone is going to taste death one day. When we all have passed away, your bodies lying in their respective graves, our bodies lying in ours, then we shall all be equal: dead bodies in graves. If one person has lived the pleasurable life of a king on his throne, and another lived in squalor and misery, never tasting any enjoyment from this life —- on the day both of them die, they are equal, are they not?” “Equal,” replied the philosophers.

Now, listen to a ‘story within a story’: Once Jesus Christ, Peace be Upon Him, was wandering in a mountainous area when he heard a sound like a voice calling to him, saying: “Oh Jesus Christ, come towards me.” Jesus heard the voice but was not able to see who was calling him, so he followed the voice until he arrived at the entrance of a cave and heard that voice calling him from the inside of that cave. He entered and saw a king’s royal tomb with an engraved golden plate attached to the tombstone.

Jesus Christ had been able to read and write since he was very small, and thus he read what was inscribed

on that plate: “I am the greatest man of my time, and I conquered the world from East to West. I lived for one thousand years, conquered one thousand citadels in one thousand victorious battles, and I married one thousand beautiful virgin girls. None of life’s enjoyments remain that I have not tasted — and when I tasted, I filled myself to the utmost; but, oh visitor of my tomb, when the day of my death had come and my soul was ready to leave me, then I felt the pangs of death (Sakarāt-ul-Mawt), and they made me forget everything — just one pang of agony and all taste for the pleasures of this life left me and never returned, leaving me empty-handed and in pain.”

“Now, oh visitor of my grave, take a warning from me: Don’t be fooled by this life, for it is but an illusion; no one can take this life’s enjoyments with him to the other world — if anyone could have done so, it would have been me — but even I could not take a thing with me, and now I am in this darkness of suffering as a result of those past enjoyments, which have been transformed into something quite unlike the pleasures they used to be.”

Then Sayyidina ‘Ali asked the philosophers: “How are you going to be on that day? Your enjoyment will become nil, and our self-imposed sufferings will disappear also. We are the ones who are really free of suffering, because now, for a brief interval, we put ourselves in prison, but very soon we shall be free, whereas you are free now for a short while but will soon be caught and thrown into the dungeon”.

Once a Saint saw in a dream a certain Great Shaykh running about and exclaiming exuberantly: “All praise and thanks to my Lord! At last I have been freed from my prison!” When he awakened and went out among the people, that Saint heard that the Great Shaykh he

had seen in his dream had indeed just died that same day — had become free of his prison.

‘Ali continued: “If the matter is as you say — that there is nothing after death — no Hell and no Paradise, no Day of Resurrection, nothing — then you and I are equal; we have lost nothing, and you have not gained — equal; but if, after death, the matter is as we believe it to be, we have indeed gained, but you, you must think what will come to this head (at this point ‘Ali gave the chief philosopher a very sharp rap of the knuckles on his head — bang!).

Then the philosophers put their heads together with the aching head of their chief and tried to think up a suitable reply; but ‘Ali had them cornered so totally that they could think of no way around his logic. They had finally fallen within bounds and were surrounded by a wall of truth in which they couldn’t find a hole even the size of a needle’s eye to escape through. The chief philosopher said: “Oh Imam, you are right, we are stupid, not you. Intelligence and wisdom tell us to follow you, and we do not wish to remain stupid. Tell us about Islam so that we may join you in it.”

The validity of this lesson may be observed up to this day, as even now you cannot find any philosopher who can escape from the net of Imam ‘Ali’s reasoning; they must admit that: “Wisdom orders us to think about life after death, so that we may have a reserve to fall back upon, so that we will have prepared for all contingencies. We are believing so that, if what has been promised is true, we will not be empty-handed.” This is valid for every time and every surroundings, and no one can raise any objection — everybody will have to face death, and all must agree that there is nothing intimately to be lost, but only to be gained. Wisdom orders us to be wise: the unbelievers are foolish, not the believers.

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ATTAINING REAL HUMILITY IN WORSHIP: TO AVOID BEING SELF- SATISFIED WITH THE AMOUNT OF ONE'S DEVOTIONS

Our Grandshaykh is focusing on and bringing into people's awareness a very fine point so that they might act upon it. No one, not even the Holy Prophet himself, is going to reach any rank in the Divine Presence by means of his acts of worship; and even if the Holy Prophet was to be offered a reward for his devotions, he would not accept it; he would say: "I expect no reward for my acts of devotion."

If a person is expecting any reward for his devotions, it means that he sees his own actions as being good enough and worthy of a reward from Allah. Whosoever thinks that his actions or worship are suitable for the Divine Presence has no knowledge of Absolute Truth (Haqiqa) and its secret knowledges. Therefore, you may see them worshipping enthusiastically, pushed on to ever more devotions just because they are thinking: "These are good actions and I shall reap my reward for them," but it never occurs to them that those actions aren't suitable for the Divine Presence.

Whoever knows that even the Prophet's devotions are not suitable for the Divine Presence will perform his devotions because Allah has ordered him to perform them, but he will never regard those acts as being worthy of Allah's reward. Whenever he is performing worship or doing a good deed, he will be ashamed of it, and say to himself: "How shall this ever reach the Divine Presence, it is so pathetic." But he knows that he has been ordered

to worship, so he worships without expecting anything in return.

But there is another group of people who are very proud of their devotions and say: “We performed such an amount of devotions, did so-and-so many actions, for which we shall reap rewards corresponding to our efforts; hard workers get paid good wages.”

You must be careful not to misunderstand me, nor to turn the intended meaning upside down; no doubt, as a result of what we are saying here, some people will accuse us of discouraging our followers from worship — far from it, Allah is my witness! We are never discouraging anyone from worship, we are only teaching people the highest good manners (Adab) with their Lord Almighty, and that adab is: not to be contented with the amount of your worship while you effectively destroy its merits with your pride and with your thinking that it will be first-class in the Divine Presence; it is better to present your worship to your Lord, saying: “Oh my Lord, I am ashamed to send this before Your Divine Presence — forgive me my shortcomings and inability to worship or thank You as You deserve to be worshipped and thanked.”

I heard of one great Saint who, every time he came to the mosque to pray with the congregation (Jamaat) would wait until everyone had entered, and only then enter the mosque himself, standing next to the shoe-rack and praying there. Then, as soon as the prayer was finished, he would run out of the mosque, saying: “Praised be the Lord, for He has covered for me the badness of my condition so that no one could detect it. If those people were to know what I am really like inside, they would chase me out of the mosque, throwing their shoes at me and beating me with them.”

Those who know the true value of their deeds regard them as being totally pathetic and worthless; they are always ashamed of them and seldom raise their heads to the skies out of their great humility. But there are many others who say: "We are Bishops, we are Cardinals, we are more than Cardinals." Some say: "Oh, I am a renowned Shaykh of Islam, I am extremely learned in the religious sciences, I am a big and important man." In order to see what may really be their case, we should just leave them after their deaths for three days, and then we should come to see what is beginning to happen to their bodies. Now, we may anoint people with a good perfume and they may smell very nice, but that is not what counts here: leave them for three days after their death and then see if Allah is giving them a good fragrance — if there arises a bad odour, then all their titles are useless.

Every religion teaches people to be humble, but the ego (Nafs) always likes to show itself off as being the best, the most excellent, the most learned and most competent person of all. That is the basic mistake of the ego, and the Prophet was sent to liberate people from the bonds of such foolish thoughts. The most humble person among all the Sons of Adam was our Prophet, Peace be Upon Him, and in order to teach us humility, he said: "I am the greatest noble person of all the Sons of Adam on the Day of Resurrection, and I say this completely without pride." In this, instruction is to be found for everyone who has been given rank by his Lord: there is no cause for pride, pride is for Allah only; everything that has been given to the Sons of Adam comes from their Lord Almighty, and at any moment He may take it away from them and leave them with nothing.

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ADVICE FOR INSTRUCTORS: UNDERSTAND WISDOM WITH YOUR HEART BEFORE YOU ATTEMPT TO TEACH IT

Our Grandshaykh was speaking about people who instruct the community on the Islamic religion and topics relating to its practice (Wa'izh). According to the command of Allah Almighty, there must be some people among each community who instruct people as to what they may do, as to what has been permitted for them by Allah Almighty (Halal), and to warn them against those things which they must avoid, as they have been forbidden to them by Allah (Haram). Most people think that it is an easy job to address people: take a book and read it — finish. So many people think that it is only sitting and speaking; either reading to the people from books and explaining, or sometimes memorizing so that people think that he really knows a great deal. For one week they prepare to give a half-hour sermon — this kind of teaching is only of the imitative kind.

A really important point for an instructor of the community is to understand the wisdoms that he speaks about. The fountain of wisdom is the heart, not the mind. If you can't use your heart, you can't be satisfied. As long as you are giving lessons from your mind, you and the people you are addressing are on the same level, and so you cannot teach them anything; to teach the teachings of Allah and His Prophet, you must have learned to teach with your heart. If you teach from your heart, then the teaching will be like honey. But if you teach from your mind only — i.e. looking up information in a number of books and then reproducing it — then you resemble one who wings from flower to flower, like a bee, gathering the flowers' nectar, then puts it in a jar

and calls it honey, but it is not honey. Why not? — He says: “I saw a bee flying hither and thither collecting the nectar of flowers, so I did as he did.” But no honey comes from his jar. For honey to be made, the bee must eat the nectar, then the honey appears of itself.

Therefore, you must not let yourself be fooled by those people who speak for hours and hours on religion, thinking they give honey, because the difference between what they give and real honey is like the difference between heaven and earth. People who claim to be teachers are of two kinds; one kind are like wasps who go from flower to flower like bees, but never produce any honey or beeswax. Even if they have attained the highest level of knowledge that the mind can encompass, if their teaching does not come from the heart, it isn't honey. The other kind of teachers are like bees, their teaching comes from the heart and is like pure honey. How does one become such a ‘bee’? The Prophet says, if a person can keep sincerity (Ikhlas) with his Lord for forty days, then his Lord will open up fountains of wisdom for that person.

During the time that Sayyidina ‘Ali was Khalifa in Kufa, he travelled to Basra and made his rounds of all the mosques in order to listen to the people who were teaching in those mosques. After visiting each of them and hearing every instructor speaking from his pulpit, he issued a decree ordering all except Hasan Al-Basri and Qadi Shurayh to stop preaching; he forbade all of them to address people in the mosques. He said that all of the ‘instructors’ other than those two were only storytellers who parroted stories without understanding their real significance, even if they were claiming to be teaching people good. Sayyidina ‘Ali gave permission only to those two to do any teaching in the mosques, — for the others, no need.

You may eat some rotten food, and your stomach might become upset and you will induce vomiting, but whoever listens to something no-good cannot get rid of it so easily, and it may stay with him until the end of his life. It is for this reason that our Grandshaykh cautioned his murids against listening to scholars who deny Tariqats and Murshids, for maybe they will poison you. If a person sits with such deniers, he must be prepared to carry a heavy burden of darkness and live with an injured heart for one year.

Our Grandshaykh told the following tale in order to describe people to whom you may, and indeed should listen: Ibrahim bin Adham, who is known as King of the Ascetics (Sultan Az-Zahideen), was a great king who one day heard the call to come to the way of his Lord. He left his kingdom and gave everything to his commanders, generals, princes and royal family. When he was just ready to leave the palace for good, he called one of his slaves, who had been the palace gardener, and told him to come; then he gave his royal cloak to that slave and asked him to give him his gardener's coat in exchange. The gardener was astonished at this and full of fear; he said: "How may it be possible for the lowest of servants to wear the king's royal cloak, and for the majestic king to wear these dirty old rags?" The king answered: "Oh my son, do you not know that last night your Sultan became a slave of a slave of a slave...? Now I am a slave of seven slaves, the top one of them being a slave of the Almighty." See how quickly he came to the level of humility, how he regarded himself as being nothing, as being level with the earth.

Now our Grandshaykh says: "Oh Nazim Efendi, whoever desires to teach people in mosques and Sufi schools (Zawiya) must be very careful, especially in these times in which we are living. In the time of Ibrahim bin Adham, he counted only seven masters; now, in our

times, if a person is not regarding himself as being on a lower level than many thousands of people, if he is not regarding himself as the slave of many people whom he deems superior to himself, then he will never be able to carry out his duty effectively: he will never make them believe in their Lord, or, if they are already believing, he will never strengthen them in their faith.

For example, here we are in Damascus: if an instructor of religion can't look at himself as being a slave to everyone, it means that he has some egoism, and that egoism will spread through his teachings to everyone who comes in contact with him. Grandshaykh was saying that if a man who addresses people doesn't humble himself and won't regard himself as being a slave in front of his audience of thousands, then those people whom he is proposing to teach will 'piss on him' and his teachings. What I mean to say is that the people will hear so much good advice from that instructor, but they will do exactly the opposite of what they were advised.

To prevent this from happening is no easy matter, because everyone who is studying and learning and learning still more is, in most cases, going to become an egoist; and when people come to him and listen to him, they will go off and do as he does. So many big shaykhs never admit or realize the necessity of fighting their egos, they just continue amassing knowledge which benefits neither themselves nor anybody else. Their knowledge feeds only their egos. They never consider, nor are they able to perceive that an important element is missing from their religious lives. And so, as they won't accept training at the hands of a Grandshaykh, they find themselves, along with the teachings they have imparted, being disrespected by those very people whom they were thinking to help. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance for a person who wants to teach people to really see himself as their servant — to humble himself

in front of the people he is hoping to teach.

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ONE BUD IN EACH TREE CONFIRMS
THE APPROACH OF SPRING:
WESTERNERS ARE BEING GRANTED
FAITH AS MUSLIM NATIONS ABANDON
IT

We are seeking Divine Help, and that Divine Help comes through Saints, as they are in contact with the Heavens and have heavenly powers: The forty Saints called “Substitutes” (Abdal, Budala) are centred in Damascus. Each one of them has three hundred kinds of powers, any one of which, if put to use, could move the Himalayan Mountains into the Ocean. Anyone seeking Divine Help may gain access to it through being in contact with such a Saint. You may walk with them, sit with them, eat with them or listen to them — all such activities will bring you Divine Help in your efforts to fight your ego, to conquer it.

So many people, especially in Western Europe and America are fascinated by and very interested in miraculous happenings. Thanks to Allah, in our Eastern countries, no one is interested in these things. But you and we are all servants of our Lord, and He may give anything to anyone. At present, the Christian World is in self-imposed exile from the blessings (Baraka) of Islam; for fourteen hundred years, in accordance with the Divine Wisdom which decreed it to be so, they have been kept far away from benefiting from its baraka. But now, little by, little, that wall between us is beginning to crumble.

Allah Almighty warns the Muslims in the Holy Qur'an: "If you turn away, We will replace you with another people, and those people will not be anything like you (i.e. Will not turn away as you have)." The implication of what Allah is saying here is: "If you turn your backs and flee from Me, My Qur'an, My Prophet, I will take from your hearts the guidance which I have given you, and bestow My favours on another people, more worthy than you to wear My Guidance, My Book and Prophet as a crown on their heads."

That time is now approaching: Allah Almighty is turning the hearts and eyes around so that the Muslims are only looking to this world's elusive pleasures and the glittering facade of western materialism, whereas many of the Westerners themselves are fed up with it and thus have been granted the light of faith with which to emerge from the darkness of ignorance. We are pleased with what is starting to happen in America and Europe, even if, as of yet, only twenty, fifty or a hundred thousand people may have come to Islam; numbers are of no importance, and we are pleased that, one-by-one, slowly but surely, they are coming to Islam. Just like in the beginning of spring, you may see just one bud or blossom in each tree; and although so many of the branches are still bare, the presence of that one bud is enough to give the good tidings of the approach of spring.

The winter of frozen animosities and misconceptions among Europeans and Americans regarding Islam is just passing away and the spring thaw has commenced; drop by drop the icicles melt, and so we can see in Germany, America, Japan and all other nations a small but ever-growing number of new Muslims. This is proof of Allah's desire to open the hearts to Islam, and even if all European people were popes, they wouldn't be able to close what Allah is opening.

One day I was walking with Grandshaykh in the marketplace, when an old priest came up to him saying: “As-salamu ‘alaykum”, and then shook his hand. Grandshaykh asked me: “Oh Nazim Efendi, do you know who that was?” I replied: “If you tell me who he is, then I may know, otherwise, I would have to say, judging from appearances, that he is a Christian priest.” He said: “That was one of thirty-seven priests who were ordered to accept Islam and accepted.”

Grandshaykh has the power to be the means by which such miraculous conversions may occur, and since the Prophet ordered it, the Grandshaykh must seek to carry out the order. The Prophet ordered Grandshaykh to catch thirty-seven priests of Damascus and bring them to Islam, without asking them to change their outer garb or profession, as such a change would cause untold trouble (Fitna) in these times; they were asked to perform the Muslim prayer only in the absolute privacy of their chambers. Now thirty of them are living and seven have died. In the time of Imam Al-Mahdi, so many Christians will openly come to Islam — quickly; but now you are witnessing the first signs of that spring. Even if I can count your number on my fingers now, it doesn’t matter, for we are looking for the quality, not the quantity.

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WHEN PEOPLE SAY: “I DON’T CARE...”

Real happiness for people, here and hereafter, lies in their meeting with Saints — exiled persons cannot reach that meeting.

Once Grandshaykh said: “Oh! To where shall I escape? I wish to escape, but to where? Oh Allah, to

where?" Then my Grandshaykh answered himself: "Oh Nazim Efendi, I wish I could escape to a land where there is no God. I am saying to myself, 'If I can find such a land, I will quickly run and hide myself there, and stay there until my death'." I asked him why, and he replied: "You ask me why I want to escape, oh my son? — Because I would like to be like you, with no divine responsibility (Takleef) upon me." What Grandshaykh is saying is that most of us are not really in a position to carry responsibility, not even for ourselves. Saints (Awliya) are responsible for their whole Nations (Ummah). When Grandshaykh says, "I would like to be like you, free of responsibility," he is describing and teaching us about a quality of most people — that of being irresponsible.

When I was in London, I heard so many people saying, "I don't care!" How can anyone who claims to be of humankind say such a thing as, "I don't care?" It is a sure sign that he is an irresponsible person. In the days of the Ottoman Empire, the greatest of the learned men of the time was asked by some of the people: "Oh our master, can you tell us what the first sign of the arrival of the Last Day will be?" He replied: "I don't care." The people were aghast, and said: "If you don't care, then who does?" But he just repeated the same answer until, exasperated by their incomprehension, he said: "Don't you understand what I am saying? You asked me what the first sign of the Resurrection Day (Yaum ul-Qiyamah) will be, and I replied, 'I don't care'. Everyone on that day will come with thoughts only for himself and not caring in the least for others — imprisoned within himself, alone. He may sit in the same chair as another, but he is at the same time worlds away from him."

Already we can see people not caring for anyone other than themselves, and only coming together with one another if there is something to be gained. They will

carry the burden of each other's presence only if there is potential profit in it. Because they deny the realities of the Day of Resurrection and Judgement, it does not occur to them to feel responsibility.

Grandshaykh was saying that if he could find a land where there was no God, then he would go there and be like you; but it is impossible, as Allah is everywhere; only with His Presence anything can exist at all; if not for His Being, not one atom would be in existence, nothing at all. Some learned people have expressed it as follows: "He is All-in-All." Grandshaykh went on to say: "If a person loses his Lord and can't distinguish clearly between what his Lord wants of him and what Satan calls him to, then he has no more responsibility — he has lost Allah. Responsibility is upon those who affirm the Existence of God, but since most people have lost Allah, they do whatever they do without responsibility. They know no limits to the excesses of evil they commit, as they categorically deny the existence of Allah. They have regard only for the teaching they receive from their egos, their vain desires, from their love of the world and from Satan, the accursed devil who instructs the ego to be ever more rapacious in its love for the world and ever more determined to follow its vain desires. These are their gods, and they obey them alone and are their most humble servants.

Grandshaykh is showing us, as if in an X-ray, what our inner lives really look like, that perhaps we might take heed and beware.

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THE WORST BLASPHEMIES ARE NO BURDEN ON ALLAH, BUT HE WILL REWARD THE FAITHFUL BY DRAWING THEM CLOSE TO HIS PRESENCE

Our Grandshaykh was saying that we are living in a time when the majority of people have expelled the mention of Allah Almighty from among their midst, so that whole nations are declaring officially that there is no God in their countries. They are saying this and committing Allah to ‘exile’ — so many Nations and individuals are foolishly saying this, and thereby bringing upon themselves endless problems. This worldwide catastrophe is made even worse by that fact that this illness of denial is also spreading throughout the Islamic World, so that there are now many people who contend that Allah doesn’t exist. They can be called ‘Muslim-Kafirs’; in our times the word ‘Muslim’ itself is beginning to mean ‘Unbeliever, Kafir’. Those ‘Muslim-Kafirs’ or ‘Kafir-Muslims’ are even worse in their unbelief than ordinary unbelievers.

Then Grandshaykh was saying: “Allah Almighty is looking to all His people: He sees them, hears them and knows about them with absolute knowledge. Whoever says that there is no God, or that there are three gods, or three gods-in-One or one hundred gods, they may speak as they please, their blasphemies are not going to affect Allah in the least; neither will their denials of reality change that eternal reality a single bit. Don’t think of your Lord in the same manner that you think of one of His creatures. Let us say, for example, that you are a king, and people are cursing you; if you hear about it, you will be angry or saddened. But Allah is not like His servants — He is All-Encompassing (Wasi’), and nothing can touch Him.”

An instance which further illustrates my Grandshaykh's point is that of how some ignorant people among the Arabs, when a little child is just beginning to learn how to speak, teach him some good words, but also some very bad words; so that when the child talks to them, he is cursing them without understanding what he is saying. The parents think this cute and laugh about the child, but if an adult were to say those same things to them, they would certainly want to kill him. However, as the child is small, they say, "Never mind, how cute, he is so young."

Oh people, Allah Almighty is so Great—He is absolute in Greatness, and we are absolutely insignificant. He hears the talk of men; He knows they are saying, "Three gods, no God, blue-and-green gods..."; He is not affected by the talk of people. We must understand that by His decree people are divided into two classes: one party working for goodness, the other for badness. He knows what burden each person is carrying in his life, each party is working in accordance with His decree, and no one can depart from it.

When people disobeyed their Prophets, those Prophets sometimes complained to their Lord and said: "Our people are not listening to us, nor heeding our words, but, on the contrary, are attacking us with curses and stones, and are making us suffer." Allah Almighty replied: "As I order you, so you must do; if they listen or not is none of your concern, for your duty is only to deliver My commands. Don't look after them in order to see who is pious, or who is sinning, your duty is in relaying the message (Tabligh), and it is Mine to take account (Muhasaba) — on the Last Day I will draw that account, not before." Therefore, how Allah Almighty will deal with His people in the end is a secret belonging to Him.

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“MY MERCY OUTDOES MY ANGER”

Grandshaykh, speaking about the final results of our actions (Aqiba) and Allah’s manner of judging them, pointed to Allah’s word: “My Mercy outdoes My Anger”, and he said: “For me, these are the greatest good tidings, as it gives me hope of my safety from Hell to know that Allah Almighty’s Mercy will come and cover everything on the Last Day.”

That Divine Forgiveness will cover so many people on that day; and the Prophet said that even Satan will be seeking forgiveness, and hoping that it may come to him also, but more than this the Prophet didn’t say.

Grandshaykh said that nothing from the actions of Allah Almighty’s servants will be a burden on Allah; don’t ever think that it could be. Now, listen carefully to the following description which is recorded in the Holy Books: On the Day of Judgement, Allah Almighty will order a person to Hell, and the Angels will grab him and start dragging him to the fire. When he realizes that this is really happening, he will turn to his Lord and say: “Oh my Lord, I never thought that You would really put me in the fire of Hell.” Allah then orders: “Bring him back.” He was such an evil person, did so many dark deeds and listened always to the dictates of his lower self, but he never lost hope in his Lord’s Mercy for him and His reprieving him from Hell. We can be proud of being our Lord’s servants, even if we are not obedient ones — proud that He is such a merciful Lord who will reprieve so many of us from the jaws of Hell and admit them to Paradise.

My Grandshaykh was saying that there are different

stations for each person in Paradise that Allah gave without their ever having been asked for; that is His favour and His grant unto His servants which he has communicated to them through His Prophets. When our Grandshaykh was saying that even disobedient servants will also finally attain Allah Almighty's Mercy, he quickly drew our attention to the following important point: "Oh my son, I am saying that with Allah's Endless Mercy everyone should finally enter Paradise. Such considerations, however, are for the common people, and we are not seeking to stay at that level. We are asking for the highest station, the greatest pleasure, the highest degree for His servants: the station of Ridwan-Allah-ul-Akbar. With those servants our Lord will be absolutely pleased, and they, in turn, will be absolutely pleased with their Lord.

Here is the answer to a question that anyone who is striving hard in the way of his Lord and obeying his commandments may ask: "Why should we make a great effort to please Allah if there is a good chance that he will forgive us anyway?" The answer is: The degrees in the Divine Presence of those who have made efforts must differ from the degrees of those who were complacent in this life.

Grandshaykh was saying, quoting the Holy Qur'an, that there are two Paradises: one of them is the real Paradise and the other is but a shadow or copy of it. Allah Almighty is going to give to His servants according to what were their wishes and desires in this life. Whoever was satisfied with this life's pleasures, and preferred them to the love of his Lord, asking for ever more pleasures in everything of this world, and giving the love of Allah the second place in his heart, Allah will give him what he loves most: a Paradise full of pleasures: splendid gardens, luxurious castles and lovely virgin girls — all these gifts will be of a beauty

unimaginable, incomparable to any beauty on Earth.

The original Paradise in the Divine Presence and the highest station (Maq'adu Sidq) is entirely different from the shadow Paradise. The Prophet said that in that Paradise there are no palaces, no gardens and no houris. In their place one will find the Lord's most effulgent Countenance. In the first Paradise, the shadow Paradise, the people will regard their Lord's Divine Countenance once a week at the time that we now pray the weekly congregational prayer (Salat ul-Jum'a). When they take a look at His Face they will forget all else; the Divine lights from His Divine Face will make them forgetful of everything else, they will occupy them until the veils of majestic grandeur are lowered; then they will return to their selves, When they are gazing at their Lord's Countenance, they are taken from themselves and are no more there, but when the veil of grandeur is lowered, the inhabitants of that Paradise come to themselves and proceed to enjoy their paradisiacal pleasures more than ever — everything will appear new and full of more light than before. But for those who worked in this life for His pleasure, Allah is taking them to His Divine Presence and not letting them out. That is the real Paradise. Our Grandshaykh was saying that to be in the Divine Presence for only one second, he would give all the eight Paradises — it is so valuable an experience.

In general, the people now living in this life like it more than they like the worship of their Lord, for which they are making only minimal efforts. In their hearts, this life takes the first place and God takes the second; in the afterlife, they will find everything according to what was their liking here on Earth. The inhabitants of both Paradises will be perfectly pleased with their Lord: those who are in the Divine Presence will be pleased, and the inhabitants of the Gardens will also be pleased — everyone will be content. Now, you are all

free to choose: If you prefer physical enjoyments, you will find what you are accustomed to, but if, in this life, you cultivate love for your Lord in your hearts, then, in that life, you will find His Presence.

For each group there will be eternal improvement — everyone will be improving within their stations. Allah Almighty will bestow on them ever-increasing bounties, always corresponding to their levels. For example, an immature child is not going to enjoy the company of adults — he will rather seek the company of other children — just as an adult will not be content among children; and so, in the afterlife, each will blossom on his own branch and will never look to his position as being in the least deficient: there will be no envy on the part of the inhabitants of the lower Paradise in regards to those of the higher realms, for their satisfaction with their Lord's favour will be complete.

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PUNISHMENT AND REWARD IN THE GRAVE AND BEYOND

(A question was asked at this point): “Mawlana, in the light of these good tidings from the secrets of the Holy Qur'an, namely: that Allah's Mercy encompasses all, that the mere assumption of Allah's Mercy is sufficient for attaining it, and that neither body nor soul will shoulder the blame for bad actions and will thus escape punishment — in the light of these teachings the element of fear seems to be negated. So many of us came to Islam because of the fear of Hell that we feel when we read about it in the Holy Qur'an; won't this news of Allah's All-Embracing Mercy eliminate the fear of Hell as a deterrent of bad actions?”

The Shaykh answered: We can understand that punishment is Allah's way of purifying the servant for his entry into bliss. Many people will suffer in their graves, on the Day of Resurrection and in the fires of Hell. Absolute Justice will reprieve both body and soul from punishment, and forgiveness will be granted; but from those dirty actions which have come out of the interaction of body and soul, Allah will create shapes in the exact likeness of the sinners to represent them in Hell. This likeness or effigy will be just as dirty as those actions were, and it will stay in Hell until it is cleaned. In the face of this punishment, one will suffer intensely — his shame will be so great, and at that time so difficult to bear, that he will wish for the Earth to swallow him.

There is a famous tradition (Hadith) from the Holy Prophet which will shed more light upon the point in question. He said that once a man died and was laid in his grave where two Angels came to question him, saying: "Who is your Lord? What is your religion? Who is your Prophet? And what is the Book that he brought?" He withstood this interrogation and gave all the correct answers, so that, when the angels left, an opening formed in his grave and through this entered a person of such beauty, elegance and delightful fragrance that he couldn't turn his eyes away from him. He had never seen such a magnificent person, and his happiness at beholding him was so great that, if it could have been divided among the whole World, no one would have remained sad. He asked that radiant person: "Oh my Lord's servant, who might you be?" That person replied with the sweetest voice: "I am your good actions. My Lord created me from the good actions performed throughout your life, and now I am your friend and companion forever."

Then the Prophet went on to say that if, however,

a person has spent his life committing evil deeds and then, in his grave, is not able to answer the questions of the Angels correctly, there will come to him a person so ugly, so vile and so wild — impossible to imagine. How do you feel when a scorpion or a cobra is creeping up upon you? The disgust and repulsion he will feel at the sight of this horrible shape will be far in excess of that, and he will be thinking only of how he could escape from that grave, but it is impossible and every way he turns he will be facing that hideous apparition. You cannot imagine the distress he will find himself in. Finally, that horrid shape will take him in its arms and embrace him, exuding such a stench, that if you were to smell it now, you would not be able to eat for the next forty days.

Then the person in the grave will say: “I seek refuge in Allah from you! Who are you?” The vile creature will answer: “Don’t you recognize me? You were with me all your life and you were very proud of me; I accompanied you to so many bars, casinos and houses of ill-repute, and now you do not know me? I am your bad actions; I carried you all your life, and now you must carry me — I shall be with you until Judgement Day.” Then, he and his bad actions will lie in that grave, and for that reason the grave is called ‘the box of works’.

On the Day of Resurrection, Allah orders for the effigy of those bad actions to be thrown into Hell, while the person stands on the heights between Paradise and Hell (Al-A’raf) to observe, in a state of shame and contrition, the punishment being dealt out to him, unto the form of his bad actions. Then, finally, when he has been cleansed of those dirty actions, he is freed of them and passes on to the gates of Paradise. There he finds two springs, two pools of water big enough for the whole Nation of Mankind (Ummah) to bathe in. In the first spring, all those who enter it will be transformed physically, so that they emerge in a form befitting the

inhabitants of Paradise: if they be male, they will come out as handsome as the Prophet Joseph, and if they be women, they will be transformed into equivalent beauties. From the second spring they will drink, and this drink will eliminate all of ego's bad characteristics. Both physically and spiritually clean, handsome and excellent, they will pass through a gate so wide that one billion people may pass at one time; but immediately on entering paradise, each one will find his own private way to his own private Paradise, where he will be with his loved ones.

That is the final destination, but along the way one will encounter many troubles, as the results of bad actions are sufferings. The Prophet said that his Nation (Ummah) would often find punishment in this life rather than in the next, and that each of those sufferings in this World would amount to forgiveness there. This applies to all people after the time of Muhammad, Peace be Upon Him, for now all people belong to his Nation, whether they like it or not. There now remains no Nation belonging to any of the former Prophets, as their time has passed and gone. This is the time of the Last Prophet, and, at the end of time, Jesus Christ ('Isa) will return and announce that he and all Prophets before him are followers of Muhammad, Peace be Upon Him.

Allah Almighty has created Hell for the purpose of cleaning and purifying, as He does not like to make people suffer without wisdom. This is Grandshaykh's understanding and it was also Shaykh Muhyuddin Ibn 'Arabi's understanding of the Holy Tradition (Hadith Qudsi) : "My Mercy surpasses My Anger." Therefore, we may hope for the final outcome to be a general 'amnesty' for everyone, and we are pleased by that prospect. For example, you may be in a palace full of every comfort, but the fact that there are suffering people outside your palace prevents you from being truly happy; when,

however, you learn that all those people have attained mercy according to their levels, you will feel relieved and say: “Now Allah has expanded His encompassing Mercy to everyone.”

It is a good manner to always think about our own egos as being worthy of eternal punishment in Hell. We can hope for reprieve only through Allah’s All-Encompassing Mercy, and we ought never to assume that we will be the first to enter Paradise; instead, we should always think to ourselves: “I am the worst and my ego is the dirtiest; were it not for Allah’s Mercy, I would surely be destined for Hell. My only hope is His Forgiveness.”

In a famous Hadith the Prophet, Peace be Upon Him, is related to have said: “To him who knows no mercy, no mercy will be shown.” The merciless person in whose heart there is no wish for mercy for anyone, he will himself not taste of mercy. Mercy attracts more mercy, cruelty attracts cruelty, badness draws badness and goodness draws goodness. But mercy dwells in the hearts of all true believers and therefore, in the face of the punishment, so many Saints will run forward offering to take the punishment of so many others upon themselves — this is the degree of mercy and self-sacrifice their hearts have attained — however, it is not Allah’s way to lay any burden or punishment on his Saints in the afterlife, nor to punish any individual for sins he has not committed.

Sultan Al-Arifin, Abu Yazid Al-Bistami, once said: “Oh my Lord, You have Power over all things and You have absolute Power to do anything You wish to do; therefore, I am asking You now to make my body so big as to fill seven Hells, so that no place remains for other people. Every punishment You would give to Your people, pour it on me instead.” Then came the Divine

reply: “Oh My servant, are you trying to compete with Me in generosity and mercy whereas I am the Most Merciful of the Merciful (Arham-ur-Rahimeen), the Most Generous of the Generous (Akram-ul-Akrameen)? All your generosity and mercy is only like a drop in an endless ocean compared to My Mercy and Generosity that I am giving out to My servants every minute, and I demand of you no blood sacrifice.”

Grandshaykh says: “Whenever I speak on this subject, I am always asking Divine Permission to bring out more and more good tidings of Allah’s endless Mercy and Generosity. Now we are giving these good tidings, and if you are not receiving them with welcome, then you are only making yourselves suffer. If there is anyone objecting and saying that there must be eternal Hell, then he may go there. We are trying to pull them into our Lord’s Mercy Oceans — but they intend to put everyone in Hell, and they never think that they themselves will enter it; therefore they are agonized and outraged by our good tidings to the servants of our Lord.”

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OUR BEING’S ESSENCE (DHAT) IS
FOREVER FREE OF SIN; HUMILITY,
ACCEPTING THE QURANIC TRUTH:
“AND ABOVE EVERY KNOWER THERE
IS ONE WHO KNOWS MORE”

Our Grandshaykh was saying: “When I am speaking about the bad characteristics of people, and especially when I am ‘firing’ at them in order to clean them of these, I am attacking only their characteristics but never the essence of their beings (Dhawāt), because that essence is always preserved in the Divine Presence and is never

in any danger of being damaged. If I were to attack their inner beings, Allah would allow the Heavens to fall upon me, as He is never pleased with anyone who regards that virtuous essence as being faulty. You may say that someone's character is no good, but you can't say: 'This person is no good', for that is another matter entirely. We are, however, sharply attacking those bad characteristics, since Allah Almighty is not pleased by them, and thus we also cannot be pleased."

Our Grandshaykh had a servant by the name of Abu Bakr, a Daghestani dervish who came with him from Turkey to Damascus. He was already an old man, but one of high aspiration (Ulu-al-Himma). One day he was complaining to Grandshaykh about some people who, by their careless treatment of a heating stove, had rendered it useless. Then our Grandshaykh said to him: "Oh Abu Bakr, if you are saying that a person did wrong and you criticize him instead of praising him, and do not like him because he has damaged the stove, at that moment you are committing hidden unbelief (Shirk Khafi)."

What does our Grandshaykh mean? He means to point out that people, when faced with the bad actions of another, fight and despise that person and don't keep in mind the distinction between the pure, immutable soul (Dhat) of each person, and the bad action that perchance he may perform; it is, however, of the utmost importance that this distinction be made. We all have potential to do both good and evil, but if we do evil, it does not mean that we are evil, but only that our actions are. One should feel no hatred for anyone doing evil, but many people make no distinction at all, and are mistakenly taking actions and essence as being one and the same thing.

If it were true that our actions and essences are the

same thing, then how could we explain that ‘Umar came to kill the Prophet and left, instead, as a Muslim? If his intention of committing a bad action had indicated an evil inner being, then how could he have changed around so completely? He came with unbelief to kill and left with faith in Islam: his actions and condition changed, but not his essence. If we were to believe that his immutable essence was also in a state of unbelief, then, despite his becoming one of the greatest companions of the Prophet, we would have to think of him as a prophet-murderer in essence, and thus we would hate him always. But since we realize that only bad actions and characteristics are hateful, and not the souls themselves, we may fight evils and devils, always bearing in mind that at any time they may re-establish contact with their pure inner souls and that suddenly their actions may change for the opposite — from most evil to most excellent, as it happened in the case of ‘Umar Ibn-al-Khattab.

For these reasons, Grandshaykh often brought people to realize their faults through signs and indirect methods, rather than addressing them in direct terms; for so many undesired consequences may result from talking to someone about his mistakes — that person may feel humiliated and degraded, and from this feeling he may commit angry and dangerous actions.

Then that servant of Grandshaykh said: “Oh my Master, now I have understood that I am an absolutely useless person, that everything about me is all wrong.” Grandshaykh replied: “Oh Abu Bakr, if you really mean what you have just said, then you have attained humility and now you may indeed be useful.”

If anyone looks to himself and says: “Oh, I am so useful among my community and among people in general,” thinking that he is really something, that indicates pride on his part, and his pride makes him

useless and unworthy. But, if he says: “I am a useless person, I am nothing,” and looks at himself as being the lowest among people, then he is suitable ‘clay’ from which many useful things may be moulded.

If a person lacks humility, he may be useful on the common level, but on the level of Awliya he is worthless. For this reason, Grandshaykh admonished his servant, and all of us, so that no one will say proudly: “I am a Grandshaykh, I am a murid, I am an ‘Alim...” Anyone who looks to himself as being something, proves his uselessness. A real murid, or follower, must say: “If it were not for my Shaykh then I would have no chance at all to improve. I am nothing except with his help and he is the power with which I stand — my spirit, my essence.” In turn, the Saints say: “We are nothing without the guidance of the Holy Prophet,” and the Prophet says: “Had Allah not chosen me, I would be nothing.” This is good manners (Adab).

On the other hand, whoever sees himself as being something, is on the same level as Satan. Why? — What did Satan do? He saw himself as possessing completeness of knowledge and worship; he claimed: “I am better than Adam”; this caused his fall. He thought that he was something great, he could not admit that he was nothing save by Allah Almighty’s Grace and Power; and so, when he regarded himself as being complete through himself, he fell from his heights.

In our time, also, so many people think that they know something or that they are something — because everyone is pointing to them and their knowledge and praising them. These people have learnt some parts of knowledge and then they think they are perfect, and that other people must follow them. But, in reality, it is they who must find a perfected one whom their heart agrees with, then his perfection will rub off on them,

according to how sincerely they are able to follow him. At that time, one will see his completeness as resulting from association with that perfect person, and he will see that only with him is he anything at all.

Whoever refuses to accept a Guide (Murshid), thinking that he knows everything well enough to find his own way — he knows nothing, and he will lose his way. If Satan had been looking at himself as being nothing when Allah Almighty tested him through Adam to whom He had given more knowledge than to Satan, he would have prostrated himself as he was ordered and would not have fallen into disgrace. Most people are putting their four real enemies (ego, vain desires, Satan, love of the world) in the place their Lord should occupy, and they obey their enemies instead of heeding the command of their Lord — so how shall they be useful?

“Sometimes,” says Grandshaykh, “I am ordered to speak on some secret Divine Wisdoms, particularly regarding Allah’s predestination. At the time of Shaykh Muhyuddin Ibn-Arabi and Mansur Al-Hallaj, there was no permission to explain some of those secret knowledges which they uttered and for which the religious authorities of their time had them put to death, judging them heretical sayings. But, now, we have the permission to speak such startling knowledges and also to give full explanations thereof, so that people’s hearts may be at ease. Our predecessors were not ordered to explain their sayings, but we have been ordered to do so, so that these knowledges may be easily digested in the hearts of people.”

The highest level of all good manners (Adab), especially for learned people, is to realize the Qur’anic saying: “And above every knower there is one who knows more than he.” There are endless degrees of knowledge,

and it is our fault and mistake that we are trying to accommodate everything within the confines of our limited knowledge. Every person who knows a little bit from Qur'an and Hadith thinks that he has learned all there is to know; and, if anything unknown to him comes up, he cannot accept it.

When confronted with knowledges above and beyond one's understanding, one must at least concede to admit that: "This knowledge of which he speaks is on a level that we have not yet reached." He says this without judging and leaves those knowledges to those who have realized them, and he carries no responsibility for them. This kind of attitude is acceptable, but the best attitude is to strive hard to hear and understand well these verses from the Holy Qur'an: "Above every knower there is one who knows more", and also, "You will proceed from station unto station (of knowledge)", and to actually realize those higher knowledges and take benefit from them, reaping Allah's reward from them in this life and in the next.

Our Grandshaykh was one of those great Saints who had realized these knowledges; he was unlettered, and so he did not take any knowledge from books, but received, instead, guidance from the Holy Prophet Muhammad by way of heart; he was permitted to hear him and to tell some of what he heard. We are proud of our Grandshaykh.

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A DEFINITION OF FOLLOWING (ITTIBA'A): LEAVING THE EGO'S CHOICE

This lecture will define what true following is. True following (Ittiba'a), as we understand it, has a very wide meaning which includes not merely following, but also carrying out orders. Once my Grandshaykh told me: "Oh my son, to carry out orders is more important and of greater value than performing the devotions of all mankind and Genies (Jinn); for performing all these devotions is not possible, but carrying out orders is possible, and this is what is important in the Divine Presence."

"For example," says Grandshaykh, "so many people, particularly religious people, are saying, 'We love our Lord, we love Jesus Christ, or, we love our Prophet so much that we will gladly sacrifice our souls for our Lord and our Prophet.' So many people of each nation are making such claims, but their claims ring hollow. I say to them in earnest: 'If you really love your Lord, please leave one forbidden thing for His sake; just leave one thing that is disliked in the Divine Presence, one little thing that Allah tells you not to do and which you are doing anyway. He is not asking you to sacrifice your souls now, but to start out by taking only one small step — a step away from something forbidden. In every religion, not only in Islam, you will find at least eight-hundred forbidden things.'"

"These forbidden things are acts everyone deep down inside himself knows are wrong, because each person has a conscience, and for every bad doing his conscience pricks him. Their consciences say, 'Don't do it', but their egos push them on to those bad actions, because ego derives enjoyment from those things; ego is

swimming contentedly in Bad Oceans. Therefore, like a fish seeing water cannot make himself stay on dry land and throws himself into the sea, the ego quickly runs toward Evil Oceans when it is left to do so. If, as you claim, you love your Lord so much, go then and catch your ego but once!”

When can we say that we are really following? — When we can catch hold of our egos before they drag us into bad actions; that catching is the essence of the following of orders that will be rewarded by Allah more than if one were to perform the entire worship of all Mankind and Jinn. Nowadays people like to do everything that their egos demand of them, and they also claim that they love God and would sacrifice anything for Him. So, if you really love God, then keep far away from what He has forbidden.

Grandshaykh says that we are living in a time when the number of forbidden things is eight hundred; when the Anti-Christ (Dajjal) comes, he is not going to bring with him any new or previously unknown forbidden thing. All things which have been forbidden from the time of Adam until this present day can now be found in abundance, and therefore people are running to them, under the command of their egos whom they have made their god. They are all fighting against the teachings of Muhammad, Peace be Upon Him, because his intention was to eradicate evil from the earth and to teach people how to avoid badness.

As Muslims, we are awaiting the coming of Imam Muhammad Al-Mahdi, who will be sent to clean the world of evils and devils, and also for the return of Jesus Christ, who will be sent to kill the Anti-Christ, and to re-establish the Word of Truth on this Earth under the banner of the Prophet Muhammad, Peace be Upon Him. We are living for to see those days, and we are asking

Allah Almighty that we might be alive during that time so that we may lend our hands to the cleansing of the Earth of devils.

If the lake of evil is not drained and dried, more and more ‘mosquitos’ will hatch and spread infectious disease. Nowadays those lakes of evil can be found everywhere, but people do not even see them, what to speak of draining them; rather, they are depending upon new ‘insect-repellents’, ‘insecticides’ and ‘malaria control programs’ but they will never succeed in controlling the ‘disease’ until they look into the matter of drying up those lakes. Until they succeed in doing so, there will be no more peace on Earth, and no satisfaction in people’s hearts — people will be drinking each other’s blood, and generally seeking to harm one another.

How can we combat our own ego, and how can we start to back up our claims of loving our Lord with the performance of actions that are pleasing to Him, not to our egos? My Grandshaykh says that if some event or situation confronts you, before involving yourself in it, regard it carefully, and honestly ask yourself whether it is something pleasing to your Lord or pleasing to your ego. If it is your ego’s choice, then leave it and seek your Lord’s pleasure — you will have become a great ascetic.

“In our view,” says Grandshaykh, “it is not so important if someone is ready to give a huge treasure in charity to the poor, for that is easy in comparison to leaving one forbidden action. Perhaps he would give away the whole world in charity if he had it, but to turn his eyes away from looking at a lady, that is more than he is willing and able to do.”

Don’t look! In every religion Allah Almighty has revealed that it is forbidden to look lustfully at any women other than your wedded wives, and if you are

single, you may marry; if you are in need of a lady, it is permitted to seek marriage, but to seek gratification in any other way is a great sin in all religions. Nowadays, since unlawful intercourse has become so prevalent, we can see people's characters going down, down, down and spiritual grace (baraka), goodness and mercy are rapidly disappearing from the Earth. The Prophet Muhammad said: "The lustful glance is the messenger of lewdness."

The person who has attained to being a real follower will simply do every action he has been ordered to do and leave all that has been forbidden. Grandshaykh says: "To whomever may worship the worshipping of all Mankind and Jinn, and give all the treasures on Earth in charity, the Angels may write for him a handsome reward, but for him who leaves one forbidden thing, the reward will be so great, that even all the Angels together will not be able to write it out."

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FOOLING THE EGO: TODAY CASH, TOMORROW CREDIT

Then our Grandshaykh taught us a method through which we can fight our egos: if we keep telling ourselves that the fight will be so long and bitter, our egos will rebel strongly against us. But if we always say: "Oh my ego, you must be patient for the fulfilment of your desires only up until tonight, no longer, no more restrictions tomorrow — after today you are free."

I remember that in our country the shopkeepers used to hang up signs in their shops, saying: 'Cash today. Tomorrow credit'. You must work in a similar fashion, and give your ego hope of the tomorrow that never arrives, for when it does, it is today. Make your

resolve a day at a time and try to keep to it on that basis — the ego is stupid and can be fooled by such tricks — work today, free tomorrow. It is simple, but it works, and those who have thus deprived their egos will testify to the success of this method in their graves where they will arrive, finally, at that tomorrow and will be free; whereas those whose egos ran free in this life in the end will find that they are caught.

In this manner, move from day to day, always saying: “Work today, rest tomorrow,” and when a distance is covered, you might find a light to guide you. If someone says that Makkah is a forty days’ journey on foot from here, you will be discouraged; but if he is saying that it is only one day’s walk, you will start out on the road; and at nightfall you find you haven’t arrived, so you think, “Perhaps I have been walking too slowly, tomorrow I will reach Makkah,” and so you prod yourself on for five days, by which time you’ll say to yourself. “Well, I have come this far, I can’t very well turn back now, might as well go on...”

Whoever can be patient for one day will receive the reward of the King of Ascetics, Ibrahim Bin Adham. Whoever is trying to govern his ego must not let it wander here and there but must place it firmly in the way of steadfastness (Istiqamah); then he will receive that reward every day and will gain, in the end, the recompense for having fought the Greatest Holy War (Jihad-ul-Akbar), the battle against the Self.

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ISTIQAHA: BEARING THE LOAD OF THE DIVINE TRUST

Grandshaykh says that if a person faces an unliked

event that is sent to him as a test, so it may be seen whether he can stand firmly in the face of it; and instead of standing firmly he runs and escapes, failing the test; and, were he then, after his failure, to pick up a Qur'an and to begin reading from it, every letter and point of the Holy Book will be cursing him.

We must keep our faith and maintain our steadfastness firmly (Istiqamah), without becoming dissolute and falling apart at the seams. Every letter, every word and verse of the Holy Qur'an tells believers to keep their faith firmly, even when so many terrible events are rushing on us; to hold that faith firmly in our hands and hearts, though that may be more difficult than holding a glowing coal in one's hand.

In this manner our Grandshaykh was stressing the importance of tolerating unliked events, and he said that every religion was based upon just this; and life is so full of disagreeable things that our opportunities to put this teaching into practice are many. Our egos hate having restrictions imposed upon them, but all religions are doing exactly that — they tell the ego that it may or may not do such-and-such an activity. This is the most annoying thing possible for the ego, as its main innate characteristic is not liking to be told anything. It wants absolute freedom, but absolute freedom is for Allah Almighty only, and we, as His servants, must accept this and feel honoured at being under His command, here and in the hereafter.

As we are living in a world which abounds in unliked things rushing on a person from all directions, we must be prepared to bear every burden. Mankind has taken on the load of the Divine Trust, and it requires so much patience to carry it; but it was our first promise to our Lord that we would carry it, and if we fulfil our promise, He is certainly going to fulfil the promise He has made

to reward the patient. In religion, patience is the base you can build upon. If you try to build a building without a base, it may stand, but it will always be a precariously perched and dangerous structure that may collapse at any time.

Grandshaykh was saying that our actions, if in accordance with the Divine Commandments, will be like the doors, windows and roof of a building. As our building grows in size, our good actions become the essential parts of the building which make it complete. He says: "If there are no doors, windows or roof in a building you can't live in it." Paradise is as an empty space that has been parcelled out for everyone through the mercy of our Lord; all have been granted private portions of Paradise, but they are empty; then, according to one's actions, Allah Almighty orders the Angels to build so many buildings on those 'empty lots'. With every good action, Allah Almighty is giving more light, greatness and beauty to your paradise; you will find there exactly the fruits of your actions.

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ALLAH WILL NOT RETRACT WHAT HE HAS GIVEN

Now Grandshaykh is speaking about a Divine attribute: if Allah Almighty has given something, He is not going to take back His gift.

In the Islamic Law (Shari'a), a person is permitted to give something, and then, if he likes, to take it back again — but it is one of those actions which, though permitted, are strongly disapproved of (Makruh). There is a saying: He spat it out, then he licked it up again. For example, your friend gave you a pencil, but then

he got angry at you and took it back — a very ugly, dishonourable action. If the Shari’a says that it is makruh (permitted though strongly disapproved), even for weak creatures who are tending towards this type of pettiness, then how should the All-Beneficent, All-Munificent Lord of the Worlds take back something He has granted to His servants? — Never. Allah has given private portions of Paradise to everyone, this is known in every religion, and this is the reality of the Divine saying: “My Mercy surpasses My anger.”

The Holy Qur’an states: “And whoever did even an atom’s weight worth of good or bad shall see it.” Whatever He gave to you, you will eventually find it, though perhaps you will encounter many sufferings up until the time you reach that grant — but in the final end, there will be mercy for all, since you cannot find anyone who never did anything good at all. Even if a person never confessed his belief in God, we can understand any good thing that he may have done along his life as being the evidence of the faith-grant that was given to him on the Day of Promises. For bad actions, people will be punished until they are cleaned and then they will receive their Lord’s pledged grant to them. For every sin there is a specified period for its purification, which, by outward appearance looks like a punishment, but for the Eye of Reality is a cleansing.

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WHO THE UNBELIEVERS ARE, HOW THEY ARE SERVING THE FAITHFUL AND WHAT WILL BE THEIR REWARD.

Our Grandshaykh told me that at the beginning of creation Allah created our souls and asked them: “Who

am I and who are you?" Some of them replied: "You are our Lord, and this is our ego (nafs)." Some others said: "We are we, and You are You." And yet some others answered, correctly: "You are our Lord, and we are Your servants." Those whose nafs made them answer the Lord incorrectly, Allah Almighty imprisoned their nafs for eighty-thousand years in the darkness and wildness of the 'Valley of Hunger', and then brought them out and asked them the same question as before. Most of them answered correctly this time, but a party of them stubbornly stuck to their denial; Allah Almighty, however, did not repeat their punishment, but let them be.

Those people were then made to come to this life and, although everyone is born with faith, they were destined to manifest their stubbornness in that they were to become unbelievers in their lives here on Earth. This is because their egos tricked them into denial, even though their souls were believers and ready to obey; so Allah left them to remain under the deception of their egos and to become unbelievers.

Then my Grandshaykh explained to me what the Divine Wisdom was in leaving those people like blind men who don't even see the sun: it is in order to facilitate the building of this, world (Ta'mir ad-Dunya). It is easy for unbelievers to build in this life, because they believe in no other, and thus they can devote their full efforts and energies to building it and arranging everything in the best way for people in this life; but believers, because they believe in a life to come after this life here on Earth, and because they are working towards it, are not so much and so exclusively interested in this life. Unbelievers who believe in no other life than their life in the world will strive to their utmost to enjoy this life and to prepare everything in it excellently for maximum comfort and pleasure.

Unbelievers have been given ‘Satanic Wisdom’ which enables them to invent and develop so many things — they have wonderful imagination. If not for the unbelievers, we might be living in caves yet, in huts or tents: no skyscrapers, airplanes, gigantic ocean Cruisers, tape recorders, computers, central heating, no electricity — none of these discoveries and inventions. But they have been given a Satanic Wisdom, and every day you see them coming up with a new device.

Grandshaykh went on to explain how these unbelievers are, in reality, servants of the believers. How? Take this watch, it costs perhaps twenty-five pounds. If I give you one-hundred pounds, can you make me one? No, you can’t. Oriental people may possess the money, but they cannot make watches (perhaps now they are beginning to, but the invention is Western); therefore, twenty-five pounds is cheap, even one hundred pounds is still a cheap price, for even if I gave you a thousand pounds you would not be able to make me one watch. They are our servants, and we are gratefully utilizing cars, lights, planes, ships etc. They worked and then sold us those things; now, maybe we can also produce them, but we couldn’t invent them, it would be too difficult and too much trouble for us because we are not as obsessed with these things as they are.

The Prophet said: “He who serves his Nation is of its noble ranks.” Allah Almighty will inspire those inventors on the Day of Judgement to say: “Oh our Lord, we were servants for Your believers, and the Prophet has said that the servant of a people is of noble rank, so give us, therefore, our reward.” Allah Almighty is keeping so many Mercy Oceans — if He were to spread out only one of them, no one could remain outside of it. If you look at the skies above, can you imagine anyone falling outside of them? So don’t imagine that anyone can be excluded from Allah’s Mercy Oceans on that Day — everyone will

attain what is suitable for him.

The secrets of Holy Qur'an which Grandshaykh is opening up now have not appeared in earlier times; they are knowledges pertaining to the era over which Sayyidina Al-Mahdi shall preside. Everyone who lives at that time will see the unfolding of all these secrets, the secrets which are now budding in your hearts.

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TAP YOUR UNDERGROUND SPRINGS

My Grandshaykh was speaking about the People of Truth (Ahl-ul-Haqiqa), saying that they are endowed with Divine Wisdom, and not just like ordinary learned people who parrot the knowledge they learned from books without understanding what they teach.

The Prophet says: "Everyone of us has been given wisdom treasures in his heart, but if he does not wish to dig them out, they will remain hidden, buried in his heart; nothing will become apparent of those fountains of wisdom." Take, for example, a person who owns a piece of land beneath which are to be found abundant underground springs; but if he never does any digging in that plot of land, never explores it for water, then he will never find those springs, nor will he benefit from them. One needs to work and tire to get to that water. Some land is easy to dig, and some land is much more difficult, but we know that the harder the ground, the sweeter and purer the water.

The Holy Prophet says: "If a person can be totally sincere with his Lord for forty days, Allah Almighty will open his heart to Divine Wisdom, so that this person's speech will be with Divine Wisdom." It is not so easy to

attain sincerity in worship, but it is the most important aspect of it, as Allah states in the Holy Qur'an: "Is it not Allah to whom belongs the pure religion?" Allah Almighty is asking His servants to worship Him with true sincerity.

What exactly does it mean to be sincere in our actions? When you are buying butter, you ask whether it is free of all impurities — pure, or mixed with other fats — and if it is mixed, you don't accept it as butter. Likewise, if a person, in the course of his day, mixes his good actions and obedience to the Lord's commands with bad actions and disobedience that Satan and his ego push him into, then even his good actions will become impure. But, if you can keep every action in line with Allah's commands for forty days, then, according to your purity, Allah has promised you Divine Wisdoms from His Treasures.

What is involved in keeping sincerity for forty days? It is not so easy — you must keep your eyes, tongue, ears and all your limbs and organs. You must also be very watchful over your heart, that bad thoughts and darkness do not come upon it while you are heedless; it requires great patience. But once Allah has opened your heart, He will never seal it up again, it keeps pouring forth forever.

Once one's heart is opened, he is no longer in need of studying many books, but rather, books may be written from his sayings. Once one has reached this station, one's knowledge is always fresh, not stale, and like easily digestible and delicious food which delights those who eat it; not like stale, old food which has been sitting on a shelf for years. The words of Saints are always fresh because they are continually absorbing new knowledge from the Prophet's heart. Now such people are very few, and most of them are hidden, while many other

people are dishing out old, stale knowledge which no one derives any benefit from; hearts always long for the living teaching, but that is to be found only with very few.

In the Holy Qur'an, there are endless Oceans of Knowledge from which everyone may always take new knowledge, and through its verses all of the people from the time of the Prophet until the end of time may find all the guidance they ever need. Those people who have been granted Divine Wisdom may give unto people, in accordance with their capacities, what they may need to know of the secrets contained in the Qur'an — may give them what they might otherwise overlook and remain ignorant of. Therefore, when you are in the presence of such a person, you may think that he is addressing you personally and directing his speech at exactly the things you are in need of hearing and that are pertinent to your life. In fact, everyone may think that the Shaykh's words are directly aimed at him, and this is a miracle given to those who have attained Divine Wisdom. They may give you whatever you are in need of; perchance you might hear something from him that you never thought of before, but upon hearing it it will seem to you as though you had just been thinking about that very thing.

If, however, someone is incapable of digging out the wisdom springs in his heart, then he may talk from A to Z and benefit no one, indeed, he might even do someone harm. He is like a pharmacist who has so many drugs on his shelves but is not qualified to prescribe them. If someone comes to him, saying, "I am ill," can he just give him any potent medicine? — No, he can't, and if he were to do so, the patient might well die from it. He must say, "See a doctor if you are ill," otherwise he may be criminally exceeding his limits.

So many learned people have memorized the entire

Qur'an with accompanying exegeses (Tafsir), legal decisions and jurisprudential interpretation (Fiqh and Fatwa), along with one thousand traditions of the Prophet (Hadith) — but if they don't have the wisdom to know how these may be beneficially dispensed to people, if they don't know how much of which medicine is appropriate for each of the patients, then they had better first study the science of diagnosis and treatment before they dispense drugs or accumulate even more drugs, uselessly, on their shelves. That science is to be learned at 'medical school', not 'pharmacy school', in other words, at the feet of a Shaykh and under his direction, not at the dry lectures of clerics and scholars who put one to sleep on the spot. Only those people who have Divine Wisdom are the real doctors who can cure the illnesses of our egos.

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UNDERSTANDING THE SECRETS OF THE DEATHBED

Our Grandshaykh was saying that all those who have been granted Divine Wisdom agree upon the point that Allah Almighty has given everyone of the Sons of Adam a portion in Paradise. Even the most intransigent unbeliever, when on his deathbed, will turn his eyes away from this world, and he will lose hope in his ever being able to enjoy it anymore. At that time, even if you put the most beautiful girl on his chest, he is not even going to look at her, and if you give him the most valuable jewels right in his hand, he is not going to take them.

At that time his Lord is looking at him, and the Lord knows best what condition His servant is in. No one knows except Allah Almighty if he is yet going to

persist in his unbelief or turn to Him, before his soul has come up to his throat, and say, “Oh my Lord!” Therefore, Islamic Law forbids Muslims to say that anyone died in unbelief (Kufr); it is absolutely forbidden. This is a very important point and it indicates the most wide-ranging tolerance in any religion.

No one knows how that person died: in belief or unbelief; that is one of the secrets of the Unseen known only to Allah. The Prophet is aware of the condition of that member of his Ummah up until the last seven breaths, when Allah orders: “Oh My Prophet, leave that servant to Me — you are now dismissed.” Then our Lord receives His servant without any intermediary. This secret knowledge is also a great good tiding, as by it we may know that Allah Almighty, in the end, is going to take us in His Own Hands, and will not leave us in the hands of our egos and Satan.

If in those last moments unbelievers will believe, they will enter their private stations in Paradise that were granted to them in pre-eternity. Their stations differ from the stations granted to those who believed before arriving at their deathbeds, but each person will be content with his station and enjoy it, and each one will consider Allah’s grant to him as having been the greatest. No one will be sorry that he is at the station he is at and not at another — no envy or displeasure. Everyone must return finally to his ‘Heavenly Headquarters’ — that is the meaning of the Qur’anic verse: “Verily we belong to Allah, and verily to Him is our return.” So many things may occur between those two ends of our journey, but we must ultimately return to our Divine Stations in the Divine Presence.

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THE WISDOM OF NOT TRYING TO BE A TEACHER

Some people like to try and teach everyone. They say: “I know,” and they tell people, “Do this, not that; read this, not that; follow this, not that.” Especially old people have a tendency towards doing this, for when a person has grown old, he thinks that by virtue of his age alone he may have learned everything there is to be learnt, and that he is now capable of teaching others.

Our Grandshaykh was saying to his servant Abu Bakr: “Oh Abu Bakr, don’t try to be a teacher of people; when you leave off teaching people and start listening to them instead, then Allah Almighty will teach you through them. Don’t say: ‘I know,’ for whoever says this will never improve but will always remain at his present level of knowledge. If, however, a person humbles himself and listens to everyone’s knowledge, seeing himself as being in need of all the knowledge he can possibly absorb, then his Lord will teach him through His servants and pour out upon his heart ever-increasing wisdom.”

Don’t think that you are a teacher for anyone, because even Prophets weren’t claiming to teach, but only to impart a message, to call people to the way of Allah Almighty. When Prophets complained about their peoples’ disobedience, Allah said to them: “My command to you is only to call to My servants, not to check and see whether they are accepting or not, I am the One who will take account; so don’t listen for their response; deliver your message, then leave them.” That is Allah’s command, and He also says in the Holy Qur’an: “And does not the Creator know His Creation?” Allah is asking, and it is for us to say, “Yes, of course my Lord.” Allah knows best what the characteristics of His servants’ egos are — those egos will never accept that anyone

teaches them anything. The ego always snarls: “I know; therefore I am not in need of being taught by you.” It is so proud, therefore Allah commands His Prophets only to call to the people, to remind them of what they have forgotten, as Allah spoke to our Prophet: “Make them remember!” (fa dhakkir). That is the best method.

Who, then, can be successful in his attempt to remind people of their Lord? — Only he who makes himself as equal with his students, and is not putting himself on a pedestal and looking down from it; if he can place himself together with them on their level, they will be happy and content and, thus, will be able to learn — if you are on the Sun, and they are on the Earth, how can you talk to them? — You can’t. This is a secret characteristic of people: they need to feel comfortable and equal with those whom they want to learn from. Therefore, Prophets, in spite of their having attained to heavenly stations and being so firmly planted in them that their souls are never leaving the spiritual world, yet put themselves on the level of the simplest people, in order that they may be able to benefit those people.

Here is a tale which may illustrate this point: When the Holy Prophet conquered Makkah, he cleaned the Holy House (Ka’bah) of all the idols, smashing them all to bits. One idol, however, was too tall for a single man to smash, so Sayyidina ‘Ali, the cousin of the Prophet, said to the Prophet: “Oh, Rasulallah, please step on my shoulder so you may be able to reach up to the idol and break it.” “Oh ‘Ali,” answered the Prophet, “you might not be able to support me, but come, you may stand on my shoulder.” (It is well known that whenever the revealing Angel descended on the Prophet, his body would become so crushingly heavy that it once forced a camel to kneel down by its momentous weight; as he never knew when to expect the Revelation, he was reluctant to let ‘Ali bear him, even though ‘Ali was such a powerful man

that he was known as the ‘Lion of Allah.’) ‘Ali said, “I am ashamed to put my foot on your shoulder — may my soul be sacrificed for you.” The Prophet replied: “Don’t worry, I am ordering you, so just step up.”

When ‘Ali then climbed upon the shoulders of the Prophet, he immediately found himself looking at the Throne of Allah Almighty (Al-Arsh) — its glory taking him far away from this world. The Prophet left him gazing like this for some moments, then he said: “Oh ‘Ali, have you not broken the idol yet?” With the Prophet’s words, ‘Ali returned to this world once more, and found himself standing in front of the idol which he then proceeded to break.

This is a proof that the Prophet was always in the Divine Presence, but with his bodily personality was sitting, moving and speaking with the ordinary people, so that even the simplest Bedouin among them could understand him perfectly well. As a result, he was successful in delivering his Lord’s message to everyone. During the sermon he gave on the event of the farewell pilgrimage he asked: “Oh my Nation, have I conveyed the message to you as I was ordered?” — And the multitudes answered: “Yes, you have conveyed.” Then the Prophet turned unto his Lord and said: “Oh my Lord, do You witness for my Nation?”

This is a very fine point: from every person a different kind of knowledge came to the Prophet’s heart and poured itself in it; whosoever follows the Prophet’s way must do as he did: he must remind people in such a way that Allah will teach him through the people. Whoever desires improvement must be a student, as our Holy Prophet was a student throughout his life.

THE STORY OF THE MAN WHO WAS INFATUATED WITH HIS OWN KNOWLEDGE AND PUT THE ASSEMBLY TO SLEEP

This is a tale that Grandshaykh related to me about the Great-Grandshaykh ‘AbdulQadir Al-Gilani and his son; from this tale we may understand that there are two kinds of knowledge one kind is rooted in Divine Wisdom and is given to some people who fight and capture their egos, and then enthrone their soul in its rightful place, the heart; they always move in accordance with the Lord’s commands and never deviate from them; they never stoop down to their egos’ lowest desires. The second group of people have a kind of knowledge which is learnt from books, and they are called Outward or Externalist Scholars (Zhahiri Ulama), They are often very proud of this knowledge and see themselves as being above everyone else and put themselves on a special level apart from the other people. In their eyes, the knowledge that comes to the hearts through spiritual struggle, through battling the ego (Mujahada) is not even to be counted as knowledge, not to speak of depending on such ‘knowledge’ as a way to total surrender to Allah. They claim: “Knowledge is only what is written in books.”

The son of ‘AbdulQadir Al-Gilani was a famous learned man in his time, but he was not humble and did not surrender to his father’s superior knowledge, as he regarded himself as being much more learned and of a higher station than his parent. He was always astonished when he saw how the multitudes of his father’s disciples flocked to the Grandshaykh’s lectures, and how, when he began to speak, so many seemed to swoon away in apparent ecstasy. Whenever he witnessed that amazing

spectacle, he thought to himself: “My father’s knowledge is not as great as mine, I am seven degrees higher than he is; so, if the people swoon in such a manner upon hearing his discourse, what will happen to them when I speak? I fear that if I address them, they might have to be carried out dead!” So he thought.

Now, Grandshaykh ‘AbdulQadir was listening to all these thoughts passing through his son’s heart; Awliya know so many things that are happening in the hearts of people because Allah Almighty has given them that power of perception. They may listen, but they are not in need of always exercising this power — only when a particular situation arises in which someone may well benefit from it will they put this power to use. For instance, they may listen to and then answer a question which might have been in someone’s mind without that person having ever said anything about it. By this unsolicited answer, that person might be taken unawares and be able to learn something.

My Grandshaykh had such powers of perception, but concerning them he said to me: “Oh my son, the power of perception is not really such a great and miraculous power that one should covet and seek to gain, for it comes naturally to a Saint; however, this power was also given to Satan, so that, if goodness comes to us, he easily knows it and seeks to turn us away from it. So, we cannot say that this power is very miraculous for the Saints, nor are they particularly interested in it, but if they are ordered by the Prophet, then they may use it.”

And so, ‘AbdulQadir was sometimes listening to what went on in his son’s heart and could understand that his son had a nagging desire to speak in public. So one day he said to him: “Oh my son, tomorrow I am going to be very busy, and since our followers, spiritual sons and loved ones will be gathering at the great

mosque, rather than sending them away, perhaps you could address them in my place, so that they may be pleased with you and not disappointed that there is no one to speak to them.” Needless to say, the son was very pleased about this and looked forward to the chance of showing the people exactly where he stood in the way of knowledge as compared to his father.

The next day, when the time for ‘AbdulQadir’s discourse arrived, his son mounted the pulpit in his stead and, closing his eyes, began to speak like a fountain, gushing out torrents from the highest level of his knowledges. He spouted for about ten minutes with his eyes closed in intense concentration; then, upon hearing not even the sound of breathing coming from the assembly, he thought: “Perhaps they have all died from such sudden exposure to this overwhelming knowledge.” So he opened his eyes to see what had happened, and there he saw the assembly, not dead — but sound asleep. Not one was awake, and now, as they fell deeper into their sleep, a number of them began to snore loudly, like saws cutting trees.

Since no one was awake to hear his lesson, he quickly finished, came down from the pulpit and moved through the mass of sleepers, carefully stepping, and left the mosque. When he arrived at his father’s house, he complained to him: “Oh my father, do you know what happened? I’m amazed at the condition of these people!” ‘AbdulQadir asked him: “What happened? Did anyone die or faint?” The son replied: “No, all of them fell fast asleep, even when I left the mosque, no one was aware of it — and this despite the fact that I was speaking to them on a level seven degrees higher than your teachings; I cannot understand what happened.”

Then this Grandshaykh said to his son: “Oh my son, who was sitting there on the pulpit?” The son, surprised,

replied: “I was, of course.” “Ah, you see, therefore, as you were sitting there, they all fell asleep.” “Oh my most venerable father, why should it be like this when I sit there; don’t you sit on the pulpit in front of them the same as I did?”

Then ‘AbdulQadir explained to his son: “No, my son, I don’t sit there, I leave that pulpit to Allah Almighty and His Prophet and seat myself in the audience among the people in order to listen to Allah and His Prophet — when a verse is read, we hear Allah speaking to us, and when a Hadith is read, we hear the Prophet speaking. When in this way I put myself among the assembly and leave the pulpit to Allah and His Prophet, I leave myself behind, no more ‘AbdulQadir, just Allah and His Prophet speaking through Gilani, but no more ‘I’ is there. For this reason alone, Divine Outpourings (Fuyudat) are filling people’s hearts and they can’t keep themselves; they become happy and contented like fish in the sea. But you are sitting there yourself, saying ‘I know’, and you are appointing yourself deputy of Allah and His Prophet, and so there is no true harmony emanating from your words, nor any Divine Aid (Inayah) with you — that is why all the people fell asleep. You killed them with your ego which prevents any Inayah from coming to that assembly, so no benefit is possible from that meeting; they are like fish thrown out of the sea, and it is your fault.”

“And thus, virtually every learned person is thinking that he is like a deputy of Allah Almighty or the Holy Prophet; so their address to the people is full of pride. They see the people as being on the lowest level and themselves as being on the highest. But, if you put yourself on such a high level, how can your words possibly reach to those lowly creatures whom you hope to benefit? Allah Almighty Himself, in His Essence, is with every creature, as it says in the Holy Qur’an: ‘And

He is with you wherever you are.’ So if Allah Himself sees it fit to be with His creatures through His Power, Knowledge and Divine Will, how shall you mount yourself high and mighty upon a throne of pride and look down at the rest of the world? You miscreant! You monster! You are killing them with your pride!”

Thereupon, full of shame and remorse, the son said to his father: “Oh my father and my Grandshaykh, please guide me to the path you are on so that I may follow you in it.” And he begged forgiveness of his father and followed him on his way until he reached his heavenly station.

* * *

THE GRAND MUFTI WHO CLEANED TOILETS

Our Grandshaykh always spoke about Divine Knowledge, but ordinary learned people usually do not accept the knowledge of the Sufis; they accept no other than book knowledge. Sufis who have this Divine Knowledge are also aware of and learned in book knowledge, and they know it well. Why, you might ask, do they acquire this book knowledge, although they are not in need of it, thanks to the springs of wisdom that have opened in their hearts? My Grandshaykh says that the People of Truth (Ahl-ul-Haqiqah) utilize this book knowledge for the purpose of ‘hunting’, for drawing learned people to the Sufi way; because they know that unless they show their knowledge of books, these learned people will never follow them nor surrender to them; but if they exhibit learning and book knowledge, they may be able to effectively bring them to the Way.

Those people who have been given Divine Knowledge’s

are hunters, and hunters with a miraculous ability for catching prey, so that by using those powers they can catch learned people of even the highest degree: Muftis, Grand-Muftis and Shaykhs of Islam (highest title for outward scholars), who are so proud of their knowledges.

Mawlana Khalid al-Baghdadi (died about 150 years ago) was a Great-Grandshaykh of the Sufi Way, and he was also very learned in book knowledge. With the combination of his skills he ‘caught’ the Shaykh of Islam who was considered to be the most eminent scholar of his time. That Shaykh of Islam, the Grand-Mufti, left his position and all the honours attached to it in order to devote himself fully to following Mawlana Khalid’s teaching. When the Grand-Mufti came to Mawlana Khalid, the very first thing he bade him do was to go down to the Great Mosque and take on work as the cleaner of the toilets. “This,” he was told, “shall be your duty.”

Grandshaykhs may order their followers to do such tasks in order that their egos may be reduced to the level of humility, as egos, especially those of learned people, are so proud — and pride is for Allah only, no one else. Satan became proud, and because of his pride he was cast down low. The Prophet says: “Whosoever has even the smallest particle of pride cannot enter Paradise.” So, since pride is such a dangerous and unacceptable attribute, the first thing that Grandshaykhs teach their followers is how to forego their pride. A Grand-Mufti is such a very learned person that surely he is most proud of his many knowledges, and that pride is no good for him. Therefore, he was ordered to leave his station of Grand-Mufti and to come to work on the level of humble servitude.

Every service is honourable, except those actions which Allah Almighty has forbidden; therefore, no

one should say to you, “You should be ashamed of this job,” because your work may be humble or lowly. Now, cleaning the toilets of a Mosque is in no way prohibited — it is not like cleaning toilets in a bar or cinema. It is the toilet of a holy place, and there is no disgrace in cleaning it. Any objections the Grand-Mufti could have had when his Shaykh ordered him to do the job would have been proceeding from his ego, saying to him: “This kind of work is not befitting of one such as you; look what an honoured position you formerly were in compared to that which you’re in now — cleaning toilets!” In reality there is nothing wrong with the job, but it does not agree with ego’s whims. So, in order to oppose his murid’s ego, the Grandshaykh ordered his murid to do that work, and the murid answered: “I will do as you say, not as my ego dictates.”

Then that Grand-Mufti began to clean toilets every day and became completely devoted to his service, disregarding his family, friends and all things beside that duty which his Grandshaykh had ordered him to perform. One day a former colleague of his — a very learned person — came to the Great Mosque and, seeing the Grand-Mufti in his new job, he objected, saying: “What are you doing? What sort of a place are you working in? Does not the Prophet, blessed be he, say: ‘Cleanliness is of Iman (Faith)?’, so how can you do such a defiling job? It is not right that a person of your rank and standing should perform such menial tasks, getting yourself dirty in the process.”

People of his kind understand cleanliness to be only of the outward kind, the cleanliness of the clothes and body, and they never consider the cleanliness of the heart, which does not seem important to them. They are making it easy for themselves, for if they were concerned with the cleaning of the hearts, they would have to surrender to a Grandshaykh.

Then the former Grand-Mufti answered his critic: “As much as you know, I know also, and more, so don’t try to make me feel ashamed at the service I am performing. Don’t set yourself up to judge me but leave judgement up to the Judge of Judges; go about minding your own business. When you judge me, you are attempting to be a judge beside Allah Almighty, and thus you are, in that moment, an unbeliever. All of your knowledge, if it does not spring from the completeness of inheritance from the Prophet, is useless and nothing but a veil which is preventing you from witnessing reality. Oh you of meagre capacities, I knew all that you know before you ever entered school.”

In reality, it was his Grandshaykh who had sent this visitor to him in order to test him — to see whether he was firm yet, or not. From what he told that man, he could see that his murid was indeed standing firmly and not swaying. That night the Grand-Mufti was in the mosque. Suddenly his Grandshaykh appeared at his side and catching him by the hand, ordered him: “Close your eyes.” After that he ordered again, “Open your eyes.”

When he did as instructed, he found himself transported to Makkah — through the power of his Grandshaykh he went from Baghdad to Makkah in but a few seconds; and as he looked around, he found himself in the presence of 124,000 Prophets and the same number of Awliya in the Holy Mosque of Makkah, assembled there to witness the Holy Prophet Muhammad giving the order to Grandshaykh Mawlana Khalid to bestow upon his murid, the Mufti, the station of trustworthiness — the station in which his ego can no longer assail him, in which he is firmly fixed, no longer falling in ego’s traps. There he may receive the keys to the treasures which have been given to him by his Lord on the Day of Promises; after it has been proven that he has enough

power to care for and keep his treasures well. Neither Satan nor his ego can trick him in that station, for he is under special Divine Protection that keeps the subtle enemies endangering him far away from him; and at that moment he has reached his Heavenly Station in the Divine Presence, his goal in this life, and he has completed the Divine Purpose destined for him.

Such people who have reached completion during this life are kings in the afterlife, and in this life Allah chooses them to wear the crown that was given to Sayyidina Adam — the crown of the Khalifa-t-ullah (Allah's Khalifa) in the Universe. If anyone is aspiring to reach that highest rank in this life, Allah Almighty says: "Follow such a person who has attained that position and be like him, then I will dress you in My robe of honour and crown you as I have ever done for My loyal servants." The way is open for the aspirant to that highest honour. For those who are not seeking the highest positions, their place is that of ordinary subjects under the sovereignty of those spiritual kings, and they may be loyal servants to them; to belong to one of the Khalifas of Allah Almighty on Earth is an honour for all people.

We are mainly interested here in casting light on the Way for those people who are aspiring to the highest ranks of surrender and servitude to Allah during this life. Whoever is interested, we are ready and have permission from our Grandshaykh to guide anyone who would like to receive guidance; we are saying to you 'Ahlan wa Sahlan' you are most welcome.

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EPILOGUE

(A question was asked concerning some brothers who had encountered difficulties while anticipating rapid progress — what led to their disappointment?)

Walking is not like riding on a donkey, and riding on a donkey is not like riding in a car — each traveller makes progress in accordance with his own particular capability.

The Ottoman Sultan Sulayman once ordered an architect to build him a huge mosque in Istanbul. When that architect undertook the great task, he built the foundation so deep that it reached to sea-level. After he had completed laying this formidable foundation, he suddenly disappeared for seven years. The Sultan was furious and sent many people out to try and find him, but they returned with no success. Finally, he showed up of his own accord and went to report to the Sultan, who flew into a blind rage and was ready to cut off his head. The Sultan bellowed at him: “How dare you disappear for such a long period of time! I want this Mosque to be completed during my lifetime, and no one can know when he might die!”

The architect replied: “Oh Sultan, you know your job and I know mine; no foundation of such huge proportions can properly settle in any less than seven years. If I would have built it any earlier, the building would have been in danger of collapsing on the worshippers inside — and who would have been cursed in that case? — I would. When I build it now, its great dome will be so firmly set that even when the earthquakes of the Resurrection Day occur, that dome will not crumble or fall apart, but will pop off the Mosque like a lid from a pot.”

And so, anyone wanting to follow this Tariqat ought to know that he must be tested many, many times before he can be considered responsible enough to receive any spiritual stations. Those brothers were yet so new and untested, and as soon as the first little trial came to them they listened to ‘Tom, Dick and Harry’ instead of their Shaykh. Therefore, only when many tests have been passed, will the Prophet send a message to Grandshaykh that such-and-such a murid has attained to trustworthiness, and may now be given the keys to his treasures. Only when it has been proven that the murid is firmly with the Shaykh — with him the Last Day — will the treasure be revealed to him; for otherwise, maybe he would take those treasures and give them over to Satan — God forbid!

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END OF PART ONE

~DAMASCUS LECTURES~

WINTER 1401 H. (1981 C.E.)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH
THE ALL BENEFICENT, THE ALL MERCIFUL

PART TWO

SPRING LECTURES
DAMASCUS 1400 H. (1980 C.E.)

DO YOUR BEST FOR THE WHOLE WORLD AND CARRY NO ENMITY IN YOUR HEART

Today we will speak about friendly relations among men, and I speak to you from the heart of my Grandshaykh, as I heard it from him when he was with us; even now, I listen to him in my heart. The Holy Prophet ordered: “Oh servants of Allah — be brothers; Allah Almighty has made you brothers through your faith.” This is the Judgement of the Almighty: Every believer is the brother of every other believer.

You have as many brothers as there are believers. Brothers should love and protect each other; therefore, it is forbidden to offend or hurt any person. You must be good to everyone — even to unbelievers, but you must do your very best for your brothers; also, you are ordered by Allah, since you are a believer and a human being, not a wild animal, to do your best with everyone in this world. This is real belief — in all religions. Every believer, especially in Islam, must do his best for the whole world. Every believer must love his Lord. But our love for our Lord does not become visible except through our love toward our fellow human beings, because the love of Allah is hidden within the hearts of men. This is the proof of our truly loving our Lord: to love everyone in the world without distinction. This is the attribute of our Lord in relation to all the creatures of the Earth — He loves every one of His servants and bestows His blessings on all of them. No one remains without His mercy and blessings, and He is pleased when His servants acquire and wear His Attributes.

“In Islam,” Grandshaykh said, “to carry enmity in your heart for anyone is forbidden. Enmity follows on the heels of anger. If you are angry at someone, enmity

arises. If a man carries anger in his heart for another man for one hour, Satan will assault his heart and dominate him for three days; if he has anger for three days, then Satan will control him for forty days. If this person should die during these forty days, he won't meet a good end; he'll die in the grasp of Satan, and he will be like a slave in his hands." We must pay heed to this point with utmost care.

Nowadays, the devils come rushing, especially on the believers, to make them each other's enemies. You can find Satan and his soldiers chasing the families of believers: brothers, parents and neighbours. You must be very careful. It may be a bad thought between husband and wife to make them enemies, or to make the children enemies of their parents' — this is in evidence everywhere. Do not leave Satan any chance to sow enmity among your brothers. Allah wants all His servants to love one another; this is true faith and true Islam. Islam opposes all devils and their enmity, and it came to promote peace in general; therefore, Islam places highest importance on man's living together in friendship and harmony.

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THE TWO CONDEMNED ACTIONS

Grandshaykh says that Allah condemns two types of actions: the first of these condemned actions is being a 'fifth witness'. Four witnesses are required in order to convict anyone of adultery. Now, Allah wishes to cover the dark deeds of His servants. Just as Allah covers our bad deeds, it is the first duty of every believer not to display his bad deeds in public. Conceal yourself from shame, and if someone else does anything bad, do not look; do not be a witness to anyone's bad action. This is

highest nobility of character. Given the case of adultery, only four witnesses may present testimony. If, for any reason, the testimony of one or more of these witnesses is rejected, no one else has the right to offer further testimony after them.

We are speaking about the spirit of Islam and of its spiritual perfume — the fragrance of the spiritual perfection of Islam. Whoever incorporates this high quality does not need any courts or lawsuits; for him, there will be no more of such troubles. Islam came to us not only with outward formalities, but with the holy spirit, representing the very highest character of our hearts.

What is the second action which Allah has condemned? Our Grandshaykh says that it consists of one's taking more than four enemies. The Sons of Adam have four real enemies, and it is cursed to take on more than these four. These four common enemies cause men to turn against each other.

It is not the Frenchman who is the real enemy of the German, and the same is true for all other nations. But all people have these four common enemies:

- 1) The Lower Self; Ego (Nafs)
- 2) Vain Desires (Hawa)
- 3) Satan the Accursed (Shaitan)
- 4) This World (Dunya; lit.: 'the Lower')

Everyone fights the other for the sake of this world. If not for the lust after this world no one would fight anymore. Russia says, "All of this world is for me."

America says, “No, all is for me.” And they will wage war against each other. We must realize that their real enemies are, at the same time, our enemies, and that it is they who make us fight. Islam opposes these four common enemies of mankind.

When the Prophet, Peace be Upon Him, called people to Islam, all the chiefs of Makkah were wondering what they should do about his preaching. They said to him, “If it is this world you are after, we can give you all the treasures you want, and if that is not enough, we shall give you the most beautiful women, and if you are yet not satisfied, we will make you our king — only, you must stop this preaching of yours.”

Needless to say, he rejected their proposal. He replied: “Even if you were to put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left, I would still not desist from calling people to what is right.” This reply shows us clearly that the Holy Prophet did not come to pursue the pleasures of this world.

Therefore, when he fought, he did not fight to become king, for kingship had already been offered to him; but he fought solely for the love of Allah in order to eliminate from this world the things which make men enemies to one another. Those who claim that the Holy Prophet fought for the sake of this world are entirely mistaken. War in Islam is not for the acquisition of the riches of this world. So, if anyone has more than the four common enemies of man: Nafs, Hawa, Shaitan, Dunya, the curse of Allah is upon him.

We must be heedful of these two condemned actions, for whoever is cursed by Allah Almighty cannot be successful, neither in this life, nor in the next.

THE FOUR WITNESSES

Allah's curse falls upon the fifth witness. Who are the four true witnesses? The first witness for every action is Allah Almighty and the second is Muhammad, Peace be Upon Him. He, Muhammad, witnesses every action of his nation, as all of those actions are presented to him. The third and fourth witnesses are the two angels who record every one of our actions. Thus, every other witness from among mankind is the fifth. This means that you must never desire to be witness for any bad action. The second action which Allah's curse is upon is for one to have a fifth enemy. Curse means that Allah is not pleased with such a person; He does not love him who takes enemies from among mankind, forgetting our four common enemies.

Our Grandshaykh explained this point: Let us assume that someone treats you badly and you are angry with him, saying, "Is it not right for me to be angry with him who treats me badly?" What is the answer to this? If I strike someone, he will strike back. Don't be angry at anyone for this except yourself, your ego, because if you don't treat anyone badly, no one will treat you badly. Your badness brings badness upon you and, likewise, your goodness brings only goodness. Do not say: he hit you, or he respects you. That beating came only as a result of your bad actions and that respect came only from your respect for people. If you don't respect everyone, you can never expect people to respect you; you have no claim to their respect.

Our Grandshaykh said we must know that good and bad both come according to the Will of our Lord, and the Will of our Lord corresponds to our actions. As long as

you think that anyone's good actions towards you are proceeding from himself, you are committing "shirk", attributing partners unto Allah, because, in reality, everyone's goodness is proceeding from Allah.

The Holy Prophet said: "You must walk on the straight path with the right steps, then nothing bad will happen to you; fear naught!" Just as one unhesitatingly drives down the motorway, so goes he who takes the right steps on the straight way. These are glad tidings: No one can be your enemy. However, if you lose control of your automobile, you hit the railing, you swerve, and you have an accident. If one misses the straight path, he is made to feel the "divine whip". What will this whip be? It will be something with which you are most displeased — something thoroughly odious must happen to you. Allah's whip is for bringing you to the right path. His attributes are not like ours; we would strike someone and our ego would rejoice, but not so our Guardian Lord — His Will is only that we come to the straight path.

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A WARNING TO MANKIND

Our Grandshaykh always advised people to stay on the straight and right path. Never leave that path. If someone leaves the right way, he will incur large or small troubles. Our Grandshaykh was speaking about the wars in the Middle East some years ago. He saw so much disaster, so many refugees who left everything behind and came to Damascus, Syria. He warned those people to stay on the right path. In general, people believe that their actions will have no effect on them. They say, "Of what consequence are our actions to heavenly orders? No reaction comes from our actions; we do not believe in punishment." But our Grandshaykh

was saying that every action upon the Earth has a result in the Heavens; that each good deed brings good results which show themselves in the Heavens upon the doer of that deed. Every bad action has bad results for that person in the Heavens. Individual, as well as general calamity is always the result of bad thoughts, actions, and ideas.

Grandshaykh often wondered, “Why do they not think about punishment?” Allah causes people to be attacked by others because of their bad characteristics. If they are unjust in their actions, they will find unjust treatment. Grandshaykh participated in the First World War, fighting for the Holy Khalifa of the Muslims. During the Second World War he was in Damascus; he wasn’t fighting because the Holy War had ended with the demise of the Khalifate of the Muslims. The last Khalifa was in Constantinople, and after the First World War the Khalifate had ended. Then Grandshaykh, following the advice of the Holy Prophet, came to Damascus, where he witnessed the effects of the Second World War. After that, there were several wars on account of Palestine, and he witnessed many people in great distress seeking refuge in Damascus. He said to them, “Oh people, look at your situations, surely they are not the results of your good actions. You must know that your Lord is not pleased with you, and you must repent.” Our sins are the primary cause of all calamity befalling us. He said that these small wars contain but a little suffering (compared to the torment of Hell), but that they are an opportunity for people to reflect. Still, despite their war experiences, the people do not repent, and their sins continue to grow.

Up until the Second World War, most people were sinners who said, “God exists but we don’t keep His laws because we are sinners.” After the Second World War they said, “There is no God, no one can tell us

anything, we shall do what we want.” They are very brave; they boast that they will fight against any power. What do they rely upon — their atom bombs, hydrogen bombs, etc? If they are relying upon these, they must know that such bombs will destroy virtually everyone on both sides. Grandshaykh also warned us that soon the Greatest War will take place. This prediction comes from the Holy Prophet, Peace be Upon Him, who says that before the Day of Resurrection the Greatest War must take place: “At the end of this World, in the last time of my Nation, the Greatest War will be fought between two great powers in this World.” This war is the divine punishment for all people who deny the existence of Allah Almighty. All people on Earth who deny the existence of Allah Almighty must perish in this war. Allah preserves those who believe in His existence; but from among the Muslims all those will die who do not prostrate themselves in front of Allah. It is insufficient to be a Muslim while not keeping up the prescribed prayer; such obstinacy as refusing to do what one knows one ought to be doing will remove that Divine Protection. For non-Muslims, it will be enough to believe in the existence of Allah in order to gain that protection; for Muslims, however, at least one prostration a day is the condition. All atheists will perish.

Anyone who denies the existence of God will not survive that war. Therefore, do your best to teach people that God exists and that He is the Creator and the Lord of All Creation. If someone says every day, “Oh my Lord, Lord of the Heavens and the Earth, bestow upon us Your blessings and mercy,” this will keep him from all evil. These words are acceptable to every religion. Jews can say it, or Christians; there can be nothing against it in their beliefs. Muslims, however, must pray, must prostrate themselves in front of their Lord, even if only once a day, to have hope for this protection.

Grandshaykh furthermore said about mankind's protection during the Greatest War: Allah Almighty commissioned the Angels to protect man. Allah kept Abraham safe in the midst of the fire which Nimrod kindled to destroy him; so, Allah is well capable of preserving His servants in the midst of atomic or biological warfare. Don't be worried.

This lecture is very important. It shows us many truths and teaches us important points. It shows us the future of mankind and informs us about his destiny. This lesson is a warning to all people living in this time, and each one is going to meet his destiny. We pray for Divine Guidance and for the blessing of our Lord and His Mercy for all.

* * *

THE INTRICACIES OF RULING

This is the advice of our Grandshaykh for me and for everyone; advice which, if heeded, will benefit us throughout our lives. The words of the Saints are living words — you may constantly derive spiritual power from their discourses. What I mean is that today people have lemons made of plastic; they don't give you anything. But Allah Almighty gave to His Prophets and their inheritors the real, live, juicy lemons, and these are their living words.

Now, Grandshaykh speaks on an important point: Once there came a man from Aleppo to visit him. He was a man who was abiding very strictly by the Shariah, the Divinely Revealed Law, and gave no one permission to deviate from it in the least. He is right in this respect, but we must be very careful in this matter, for it cannot be completely carried out by everyone. Testifying to

this point is the fact that during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet, Allah revealed His laws over a span of twenty-three years. Although it was the Prophet himself who taught such eminent followers as the Sahaba, the Prophet's companions, he found it necessary to teach them the Law step by step. Now, came this man from Aleppo, and before he could say anything, my Grandshaykh spoke, addressing me: "Oh Nazim Efendi, you must use skill in ruling; not everyone can rule. You must be lenient, cautious and always remain aware of the peculiarities of the people you are asked to rule. It is very important in ruling that you make use of subtle intimations and indirect, suggestive hints."

"If rulers can rule in a good manner, then people will carry them on their heads smoothly and ease, like the sea carries the ship; but sometimes the sea can be so rough that even the biggest ships become like straws. The people are the same: if there is a no-good government, strong though it may be, it will sink. Everyone has dominion only over himself, and he must be careful regarding anyone else belonging to him or in whom he interested."

Grandshaykh asked: "What is most important in ruling? — To rule properly. Everyone who is calling people to Islam must have this good manner. Our Prophet, Peace be Upon Him, described what the characters of people living in this, our time, would be like. He said: 'Soon there will come a time in which everyone will be very proud of his knowledge and his views.' In fact, these days, you cannot find anyone who will agree with your opinion. Even within a family, you will seldom find concordance of opinion. Husband, wife, sons, daughters, they each hold separate, independent opinions they won't back down from, saying, 'I am right, not you.' There are now at least as many opinions as there are people. It is very difficult to gather together

even a small group of people who all subscribe to the same view. So, it is difficult to say, ‘Come to my way,’ for no one will listen to you and you are sure to get nothing but arguments — so what shall we do?”

Saints have strong, penetrating vision into the hearts of men. Grandshaykh said to me: “Tell this man that he must be soft and not hard with people, that he must not be like a big mountain which no one can climb.” One must make it as easy as possible for everyone. Wherever they go, you may follow them. Allah gave wisdom to man; all creatures know that man was given intelligence and that they can’t elude him, not in the deepest oceans nor in the loftiest skies. All creatures fear man, as he is able to ensnare even the fearsome lion and poisonous snakes. The Sons of Adam are terrible; among the attributes of men you may find the likeness of every animal on Earth. These wild attributes are lying dormant in man, and when they are awakened, men may become just like tigers, scorpions and snakes. All men have some of these attributes. In every ego you can find something harmful; if you can control your ego, you will protect people from harm. It is forbidden for a believer to give hurt or harm to anyone, even to insects and flies (excepting those injurious to health), — so how shall it be permitted to do harm to mankind?

Man may be very adept at hunting wild animals and at emulating their behaviour, but to hunt people in the way of Allah is more important. A hunter hunts one animal at a time, not several. He must chase his prey until it falls into his hand. Now, a person who is calling another to his path must agree with him, he must follow him ninety-nine steps until that person finally takes one step towards him. Say to him always, “Yes, you are right,” until he finally says once, “You are right!”

How can this change be brought about? Our

Grandshaykh says that no one can follow anyone else until he trusts him. Once a person trusts you you have won; to whatever you say, he will say, "It is correct." Until he begins to trust you, you must follow him. You may go with him to the places of worldly amusement which he frequents (without, of course, participating in any forbidden activities); then, in turn, he will also go with you and be pleased; he sees your sincerity. When you have the sincere intention to guide a man to the right way, you may even walk among devils in order to lead this man out of their company. If you can attain to sincerity, real sincerity, then it will give you sufficient strength; devils don't have access to sincerity nor to the strength coming from it. Rescuers may go everywhere, for they are protected by virtue of their sincerity, and they must be brave. All of the Saints have this trait, and so did the Prophets: they move among people in order to save them — they don't sit only in mosques. Attain to sincerity so that you may act upon these important instructions.

Be polite with everyone, and everyone will be polite with you; respect everyone, and, in turn, everyone will respect you; be kind to everyone, and you will be dealt with kindly by everyone. The Prophet, Peace be Upon Him, advised us in his description of his own mission: "I was sent to be among people to ease their way, so that they can follow me." If you are hard and demanding, nobody can follow you. Whoever uses these methods in guiding people will receive a reward as great as the reward given to the whole Muhammadan Nation.

What is the key to being easy with people? — You must abandon pride; everyone loves a humble person. You must be on the same level as the one you wish to guide, not one step higher.

There is a river running — if you want to fetch water

from it you must go down to its water's level; people are like water, they never like to go up.

* * *

HUNTERS WEAR CAMOUFLAGE: THE TIME ABU YAZID DONNED PRIESTS' GARB

Devils cause men to flee from good people, as they caused people to hide themselves from the Holy Prophet. Their thinking is faulty and they always hold wrong opinions; they say, "Do not go near those people, or else you won't be able to enjoy your life; if you want to enjoy your life, don't ever follow them." This is the advice of the Devil. Someone may have a handsome appearance, like a Shaykh or a Priest, but people flee from him. Christians, in particular, run away in a hurry from everything that calls them to Islam. Therefore, it may be important to use camouflage, as then you may talk to them and counsel them more easily.

Our Muslim brothers, Alhamdulillah, have strong faith. Imitation (Taqlaad) is the first level of faith in Islam, and as we imitate our parents, our level in Islam is imitation. Your Islam's level is higher because your faith is based on real knowledge. You don't come from Muslim parents — you used to be Christians, Jews or whatever; therefore, you are able to compare and to see that the truth is in Islam, this is a higher degree. Our Muslims do not have enough courage to wear turbans or to grow beards, but you can do it. Our people chase after European fashions, even though they are living in the Islamic World. In the West you should continue wearing the Islamic dress in the house, but on the street you may be flexible and dress according to your inspirations.

Now listen to a story which well illustrates this point: Once the great Wali (Saint) Abu Yazid al-Bistami was ordered in a dream to join a group of Christians in a certain monastery for their celebration at Easter time. He awoke in a fright, because he had been ordered to put off his turban and exchange his Muslim clothes for the dress of a Jesuit priest on that occasion. "How can this be?" he wondered to himself, "This dream, can it be true?" Then he heard the command also in a waking state, for the Saints have extraordinary powers to receive orders from the Spiritual World, and what he heard was this: "Wear the priest's hat for My sake, and be at that famous monastery on this day." When he heard that, he donned the dress of a Jesuit, and in the twinkling of an eye he arrived at that place.

There were gathered, on that day, seven-hundred priests, all dressed in black. They were all assembled to listen to their Bishop speak, who came out of his seclusion only once a year for this Easter celebration. The Bishop slowly advanced and proceeded to sit down on his throne, which suddenly began to tremble. Surprised, he asked: "What is happening? Is it not standing firmly?" Then, intending to begin his speech as was customary, he moved his mouth, but he was unable to produce a sound. All the monks looked at him and asked: "Why are you not speaking?" "Something is wrong today, my brothers," he answered, "I cannot speak to you as usual, there must be a Muhammadan among us!" They all looked around and at each other in dismay. "Why does he come to disturb our ceremony? Tell us who he is, so that we can kill him on the spot." The Bishop became very angry with them at this, and said: "No, it is not right that you should kill him, for that you have no permission and no authority. For so many years have I preached and taught you, and still you don't know that it is forbidden to kill any soul without a very good reason. Be quiet now and keep your peace. Now I speak to you, oh Muhammadan: by the

honour of your Prophet, show yourself!"

Abu Yazid instantly rose; for him, they were all like ants. He said: "I am the Muhammadan." The Bishop said: "You have come here today, but it is not right that you come here to disrupt our ceremony." Abu Yazid answered: "I did not come here to destroy your faith, rather, I came to build it. I was ordered to be here at this time, and I will answer your every question; ask me, if you please." So the Bishop began to ask Abu Yazid questions — one hundred questions he asked of him, too many to tell here now. The very first question he asked was this: "Who is he for whom there is no second, and who are the two for whom there is no third?" Abu Yazid first listened to all the hundred questions as the Bishop asked them, and only when he was finished, he began to answer them, repeating first the question, then supplying the answer.

When he had finished answering the one hundred questions, the Bishop said to him, "Yes, you have answered correctly." Then Abu Yazid said, "If you have no more questions, may I now ask one question of you?" "Yes, of course, with the greatest pleasure," answered the Bishop who was very proud that he had known a hundred questions to ask Abu Yazid, along with their correct answers. Abu Yazid then asked: "Oh Archbishop, can you tell me what the key to Paradise is?" The Bishop turned pale and just stared at the floor. His head fell forward until it touched the wood of the table in front of him and sank heavily onto his outstretched arms. "Oh our Bishop," they all cried, "what is the matter with you today, are you sleeping? Why do you not answer?" "Oh my sons," he at last replied, "I cannot say it, for I fear that you will not be able to follow me." "Why should we not follow you, shall we leave the key to Paradise in the hands of the Muslims, while we ourselves go to Hell?" "Very well," said the Bishop, "the key to Paradise is:

‘La ilaha illallah, Muhammad Rasulallah’.” On hearing this, all the monks repeated the Muslim Credo, cut their monks’ belts, threw their hats up in the air and quickly destroyed their idols — true faith came to their hearts in no time. Then Abu Yazid was addressed from the Heavens: “Oh Abu Yazid, I did this for your sake; just as you donned the priests’ garb for My sake, I made these people accept Islam for yours.”

This is a true story, a story which shows us that while we are in the West, we are not obliged to always wear turbans; we may dress like the people living there, if it will help them come to our faith, for that is our aim and purpose.

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PURIFICATION OF OUR HEARTS

A new day, a new lecture, a new knowledge. We ask Allah Almighty to grant us more power, more light and more happiness for our souls.

Today, we shall speak on behalf of our Grandshaykh about the purification of our hearts. It is an important point for everyone. Everyone has been born pure and remains pure until the age of puberty. Thereafter, his ego’s desires make him impure. Until puberty the ego’s wildest aspects are asleep. When they awaken, man is ready to do every dishonourable deed, all for the sake of his pleasure; and if it is not prevented, his impurity grows with each day. It is an impurity which the normal person cannot perceive. You may see a good-looking, well-dressed person, but perhaps, in his ego, he is terrible and very savage, for such is the natural condition of man. The characteristics of the ego are horrible, and if you do not prevent it from indulging in

its bad characteristics, it can easily turn into a Pharaoh, Nimrod or Nero. Every ego is capable of becoming such a tyrant.

All Prophets were sent in order to purify men from these characteristics of their egos. Every religion has one and the same goal — the purification of man. Now the most excellent and complete purification is possible only in Islam. A Christian or a Jew may ask, “Why?” We answer that this is so because Christians and Jews have neglected and virtually lost their codes of law in which were contained commands and prohibitions. Why does Islam set up barriers for everyone, saying: “Up to here, no further”? What is ‘Haram’, prohibited? Haram are all the harmful things which your ego desires. ‘Halal’ is all that which pleases Allah — Allah sets the limits. Everything within these limits is halal and everything in excess is haram. If a religion contains no code of law, no prescribed behaviour, then it has lost its active force. In the present time, this active living force can be seen nowhere but in Islam. How can one recognize this? Look at the people under the influence of Islam, who keep its laws — staying always within these limits which keep them from evil. To commit haram causes bad characteristics to develop in people. Our egos’ bad characteristics flourish wildly in the garden of haram. Therefore, a man cannot purify himself and purge himself of his ego’s bad characteristics unless he places himself within the boundaries of a religion.

How can one tell that a human heart is really purified? The bad tendencies of our egos impel us to perform bad actions. For example — envy; if you cannot remove envy from your heart, you cannot be purified. The truly purified man must be in connection with his heavenly station in the Divine Presence. This takes place through the Holy prophet, Peace be Upon Him. As soon as your heart is purified, the lights of the Prophet will

appear to you — you will be seeing him. You will meet the Prophet's holy soul. You will see him in total clarity, without doubt. He is with us now, but we can't see him as long as our hearts have not undergone purification.

My Grandshaykh explained that someone may be very learned, but if he hasn't met with the Prophet's holy soul, it means that he is not yet pure enough, that he is still within the clutches of his ego. What sort of vulgar characteristic might be present in this learned person? Maybe he sees himself as being a great scholar, and he is proud of his knowledge. This would be a low, vulgar quality which would prevent him from meeting the holy soul of the Prophet; or maybe he thinks that he is better than anyone else — another low characteristic. If he sees himself as being the finest person in the world, he is on the same level as Satan. So, knowledge is one thing and purification is another. Everyone may gather knowledge; however, not every learned person is purified. Now, the importance of purification is clear to us. Furthermore, it is impossible to achieve such purification without a Shaykh who knows how to liberate people of their bad characteristics. If someone is ill, he cannot recover without seeing a doctor. Everyone must have a Shaykh who knows the way of purification and who himself is purified. I know that our Grandshaykh was always in contact with our Holy Prophet's soul.

Once I met a great Saint in Damascus who asked me who my Shaykh was. I answered, "My Grandshaykh is 'Abdullah Ad-Daghestani." When he heard this name he rose and said to me, "Oh my son, be his doormat, remain in his service; because, in this time, he is the only Shaykh from among all the Shaykhs in Damascus who sees the soul of the Holy Prophet while in a waking state."

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KNOWLEDGE AND THE NECESSITY OF ACTING UPON IT

Whenever we begin an action with the words, “Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Rahim” (In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful), Allah will send us everything that we need, because the voicing of this phrase acts as a power generator for us.

Our Grandshaykh used to admonish us time and again to preserve every knowledge by putting it into action. Knowledge without the corresponding actions is of no use whatsoever. As you are gaining knowledge, you must solidify it with actions. Satan knows all the holy books — Torah, Gospels and Qur’an, but that knowledge remains useless to him, in spite of the fact that he knows more than anyone else. His knowledge of these holy books is only outward, but what is important is to understand the inner meaning.

One who consolidates his knowledge with actions is called a ‘Hafeez’. Hafeez also is used to signify one who has learnt the whole Qur’an by heart. It is a distinguishing mark of the Holy Qur’an that among all the holy books only the Qur’an can be committed to memory with no great difficulty. No Nation, no other people has been able to memorize its holy books, only the Muslim Nation. Muslims of all nations, Turks, Indians, Africans, can learn the Qur’an by heart in its original language. This is an astonishing fact: how a human being is able to memorize seven hundred pages of Arabic without necessarily understanding the meaning of the words. Could a Frenchman so easily memorize whole volumes of Shakespeare? How can the Christians and the Western people in general claim that the Qur’an is not a holy book? Were it an ordinary book, written by the hand of man, it couldn’t have this quality.

Allah proclaims that the Qur'an 'is easy to read and to memorize. This is a miracle. You can find so many boys, perhaps seven years of age, who know the whole of the Holy Qur'an by heart; this is the continuing miracle of the Qur'an. Who among Christians or Jews can show us adults, not to speak of children, who can recite their holy books by heart? On English television, I saw the Archbishop of Canterbury read the whole recitation of his service from a book. It is a peculiarity of the Qur'an that it is so easy to memorize, and the Qur'an itself states: "I am the Word of Allah Almighty."

It is important that the verses of the Qur'an find expression in our actions. Grandshaykh once told me about a great Imam of our Tariqat, Shah Naqshband, who had a son-in-law named 'Alauddin. 'Alauddin worked very hard; he wrote out and memorized all the lectures of his father-in-law and learned them by heart. He memorized whole volumes. Similarly, we are busy transcribing and recording in order to remember everything. When Shah Naqshband saw his Khalifa and son-in-law engaged in this activity, he said to him, "Oh my son, don't try so hard to write down and memorize everything, it is much too difficult, and you cannot keep all these words in your head. I will teach you a special way to remember my lectures. Look, oh my son, do not be a keeper of words and writings, rather become a keeper of the meanings of these lectures and preserve them through your actions."

There are two ways to keep teachings: Firstly, in letters and words, and secondly, in actions. The Will of our Lord consists in one's absorbing the meaning of teachings and acting upon it. The action is important — not the reading alone. The Qur'an was given to us to teach us the correct mode of action. Shah Naqshband also said, "Words are followed by actions; if you keep these teachings in action, new words will come to you

all the time.” Therefore, with every new teaching you must look for its essence — then you will never forget it. Many people are very proud of their memorization and accumulation of knowledge; but no one has any use for this. Don’t know so much — do it, do more and more. He who is working only to know is like a man who works to accumulate more and more food but doesn’t eat. He who acts perhaps brings home less food, but at least he eats of it. Therefore, the Prophet, Peace be Upon Him, said, “Action, even if it is meagre, is better than much knowledge and no action.”

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ABOUT TELEVISION

Once somebody came to our Grandshaykh and asked him about television. What place, if any, should this new instrument that the twentieth century has created, have in our lives?

What do all people want? They want to keep their brains busy so that they don’t have to use them for thinking. In the Holy Qur’an this is referred to as: “All talk that diverts your mind and your heart from the truth and from Allah Almighty.” The greatest affliction of our time is brought about through television. Television is used to show young people sick behaviour and to occupy them in distraction. My Grandshaykh answered this man: “You may watch that which you may learn from.” To look at a sex film is no doubt prohibited, as is everything which results in immorality. No one, especially not young people, keep to this rule of only watching what is useful and not provoking immorality. This is the answer of true religion: If it makes a harmful impression on your character, it is forbidden to watch; otherwise, one may watch in order to derive a hidden

wisdom or to learn from it.

I have heard that in the West there are some channels that show only documentary films and other educational programs; however, virtually no one watches these channels — perhaps one in a thousand. From this, it can be easily determined for what reasons people watch television. There exist magazines in which documentary articles are found, but people skip these pages and look for the pictures of women. In such a case, television and other media destroy good character among people and the relations between friends and within the family. In Islam, we judge each matter according to its usefulness. If someone can find something good and useful in a given thing, this thing is permitted — otherwise not. You must use this criterion for everything: Watch whether your ego finds pleasure in it; if so, then leave it. That which your ego does not like, you must keep it. Maybe you like to watch television when it shows such vulgar films and your ego is so happy with it; your soul, however, is very sorrowful. Therefore, after every enjoyment of your ego follows complete sorrow in your heart. Surely, most of you have experienced this. For instance, as someone is leaving the theatre, movie or opera house, a black cloud of sorrow befalls his heart. Everyone knows that the enjoyment coming from outside is only temporal, and that the true place of joy is our soul. When our soul is really satisfied, it remains so forever.

Nowadays, people demand pleasure from without; however, they are wrong in this. Therefore, the whole world is full of outward pleasures, but no one is really satisfied. Perhaps someone is sitting in a prison, but if his heart is free, he is happy and content. Another may be sitting on a throne, surrounded by all the pleasures in the world, but his heart is in prison, so he cannot find real happiness. Someone asking for pleasure from without is like a thirsty person who drinks saltwater.

He will never be satisfied. A cup full of fresh water will quench your thirst, but whole oceans will never quench it. Now, oh Western people, now that you have reached the peak of your enjoyments, if you do not give your souls to drink from the pure spring water, you will never quench your thirst. Therefore, stop and pause to reflect one minute upon this point. Come to the true source and quench your thirst; otherwise, you will die without satisfaction or joy and with no peace in your hearts.

These are huge cannonballs being fired upon the bastions of the devils.

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TRUST IN THE LORD; TRAVELING

If a man can trust in his Lord the way that this little boy trusts in his father (Mawlana points to a small boy among the assembly who is sleeping in his father's lap), then he will be a Saint, Waliullah. We are weak, we have no faith power. This little boy is better than us, he has total trust in his parents, without any doubt. He has total faith in them because for all things he depends upon them entirely and thus his trust in them is complete. How is it then, that we have so little faith in our Guardian Lord? Is He not potent enough for us that we should trust Him so little? His are endless power, mercy and knowledge. He knows everything about us with the most perfect, all-penetrating knowledge. He knows of all our situations, all things in and about us, and we know nothing. Once we have come to realize this, then we must trust in our Lord. This is very valuable knowledge for us: it is the meaning of the Hadith, the tradition of the Holy Prophet in which he speaks about the most important and valuable action — which is to know Allah. It suffices to know our Lord as well as that

little boy knows his father for us to attain the station of Walayat, Sainthood. We must seek to know Allah — this is our primary duty.

Now you are learning a little bit about your Lord and about the knowledge of your Lord. During your travels you will experience in just what ways you can trust in your Lord and just how He is looking after you everywhere and at all times. You are all foreigners coming from distant lands, from England, France, Germany etc. You came here knowing not a soul, and you speak no Arabic. But you set out for the sake of your Lord, trusting in Him you came here. This shows the power of your faith, and it means a high station for you: you set out on this trip, leaving all you had behind, and went searching to a foreign country and a strange people. This means that you are trusting sufficiently in Him and in His taking care of you. Therefore, everywhere and at all times He sends you all that you need and gives you teachers to teach you. For just this reason, traveling is one of the most important ways of training in Tariqat: it teaches you to have trust in your Lord. You may learn many things, but the most important thing to be learned is to have trust in your Lord everywhere and at all times.

Now, your Lord is looking after you in a strange country and He is looking after you well. Someone may be reading books for years and years, but he cannot learn this good manner without having practiced it. Tariqat Shaykhs order their disciples to travel, in order that they might acquire this faith-power. I am a traveling dervish of forty years' standing, and I ask of my Lord that my trust in Him may ever increase. You may be assured that by your traveling you will receive more strength, and that the knowledge of your Lord will blossom in your hearts.

Our Grandshaykh is pointing out an important fact.

When does a man become capable of feeling total trust in his Lord? A man will achieve full and complete trust in his Lord only when he is totally sincere and truthful towards his Lord. When a man looks into himself and finds that something is not right in him concerning his relationship with Allah Almighty, then he will realize that in his present condition he can have no real trust in his Lord. The heart of this little boy is pure, that is why he can so easily have total trust in his father. If it was not so pure he would never be able to have that kind of trust. To whatever degree a man's heart becomes purified, his trust in his Lord grows proportionately. It is our sins that prevent us from trust. That is why Imam 'Ali said, "If you can trust yourself to stay on the straight path, then you can go anywhere and you will be protected; everywhere you will find people who will look after you." In this way, a man may go happily along his way and travel through jungles, deserts, oceans — everywhere he will find peace and safety.

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YOU ARE AS GOOD AS THE COMPANIONS YOU KEEP

Our Prophet, Peace be Upon Him, counsels us in one Hadith that we must look to have good friends. He advises us not to sit in the shop of a blacksmith, because there is fire, soot and noxious gas which will affect you, as well as excessive noise which will harm your hearing. It is not a recommendable place to spend one's time in — far better to sit in the shop of a seller of perfumes. Even if you are not a customer, but are just sitting there, you will smell the beautiful fragrances and be delighted by them. My Grandshaykh was explaining what the Prophet means by this Hadith: "Oh Sons of Adam, you must take good people for friends; if you

keep company with bad people, they may harm you physically or otherwise.” In our times we must be very careful of this. Our Grandshaykh explained that people are susceptible to both good and bad characteristics. The Holy Prophet said: “A man is of the same religion as his friend.” Everyone has an innate capacity for both good and evil. If someone is going with a good man, then his good characteristics will appear, but if he is going with bandits, he will also become a bandit.

One day a great Shaykh by the name of Saadi Shirazi went to take a bath. In former times, people used a special kind of mud for cleaning themselves. They prepared a certain type of earth and made of it a special mud and used it for washing themselves; for our bodies belong to the Earth, and it gives new strength to the body if it is cleaned with earth. Mostly women used this method of cleaning. Our grandmothers had bodies like young women because they used the traditional method for cleaning themselves. Nowadays, the Orientals have left their traditional habits and are using soaps which are not good for bodies.

So, that day in the bathhouse, Shaykh Saadi took a handful of this cleaning mud and smelled it. He perceived a beautiful fragrance and, surprised, he asked it, “Oh mud, I know that you are but a piece of earth and that normally you have no smell; how is it then that I perceive this delightful fragrance issuing forth from you?” The piece of mud answered him thus: “Oh my Shaykh, you are right, actually I have no smell of my own; but I have kept company with roses for some time and they left with me some of their own good fragrance.”

In the Holy Qur’an, Allah orders us to tell useful teaching stories. If you understand the meaning of this story and can keep it, then you are good-smelling people, acceptable in every company. One way of keeping your

faith is this: to keep company with people of strong faith. If you want to keep your honour, you must stay together with honourable people. If you want to become humble, good, pious or learned, you must keep the company of people who possess such qualities.

Grandshaykh said to me, “Oh my son, you must follow the advice of the Holy Prophet; he advises us to keep our friends. How can you keep your friends? — Don’t show your anger to your friends. Anger is our ego’s worst characteristic. On account of your anger people are running away from you. The Prophet said, ‘Don’t show your anger to my Ummah nor to anyone else.’”

* * *

Every lesson shows us one aspect of imperfection in our character and supplies us with building material for a perfect personality. It isn’t easy; in fact, it is more difficult than sending a rocket to the moon. “Personality engineers” are first of all the Prophets — they are the architects of human personalities. If I bring stones, cement, iron and wood, can you build a perfect castle? — You cannot. In order to carry out this task you need an architect. Everyone possesses the elements for his perfect personality within himself, but without the help of an architect, he cannot combine them to form a building. After the time of the Prophets, the Saints are the builders of human personalities. If a man cannot find a builder or an architect, he resembles one who possesses stone, cement and wood, but does not go about constructing a house.

Here we are busy building our personality with the expertise of our Grandshaykh. We must become fortified in so many aspects; therefore, every lesson is important. If one stone is missing, our personality-building will not become perfect. Every lesson gives more strength and

beauty to our personality.

* * *

MA SHA'ALLAH — WHATEVER OUR LORD HAS WILLED

Today our Grandshaykh is speaking to us about what the characteristics of a real servant of our Lord should be. Allah Almighty likes something and wills that it be done, and His servant, likewise, likes something and wants it to be done. What happens? Are His wishes fulfilled or ours? We shall see that it is always His Will that is fulfilled and our wish that is denied. It is a blessing from Allah Almighty that He denies the fulfilment of His servants' wishes and that He causes His own Will to be actualized. Why? — Because Allah knows whether something is good for us or not; if He knows that something is good for us, He gives it to us, and if not, He keeps it from us. Our Grandshaykh told me that virtually everything we like is no good for us; but in spite of this, everyone wishes for his will to come to pass, and when this does not occur, he is sad or angry: this indicates total ignorance.

A man may have read many books, may have acquired many merits and academic degrees and yet he may still be in ignorance concerning himself and his relationship with his Lord. For example, someone may say to his boss, "Yes sir, as you like." This shows us the most important characteristic that a servant should have. When a servant cannot say this to his Lord, he isn't a real servant. We can see that everything happens according to our Lord's Will, but in our ignorance, we want the whole world to agree with our whims. There is a tale about this:

It once happened, that when Jesus Christ was traveling with a companion, they reached the seashore and found a pile of old bones. The companion said to Jesus: "Oh Word of God, can you not revive these bones so that I can see what kind of creature it was?" Jesus answered, "Don't ask this of me." His companion insisted again and again, and every time Jesus answered, "Don't ask this of me." All Prophets have Divine Knowledge, so Jesus knew what his companion did not know. But as he kept on insisting, Jesus prayed to his Lord to restore the bones to life. While he was yet praying, the bones came together in the form of a huge black panther which immediately pounced upon and devoured the companion and then disappeared.

You must not ask for the fulfilment of your ego's wishes. Do not say, "This must be because I want it to be so," let it happen as your Lord wishes. Maybe through your insisting upon your own wishes a panther will come and devour you. Don't cry if your wish is not fulfilled, for you must know that your Lord exchanged the fulfilment of your desires for the fulfilment of His, and all His wishes ultimately mean only good for you here and in the hereafter.

The happiness of Man consists in his being in agreement and fully contented with the Will of his Lord. If a man desires what his Lord desires for him, he will be happy in this life and the next.

* * *

**BE PATIENT, MILD AND FORBEARING;
NOT ANGRY AND SHORT-TEMPERED**

My Grandshaykh was saying that if Allah had no patience with us, then His punishment would come

quickly and with no respite. Without His patience, mildness and forbearance, no one would be alive. Our Grandshaykh was advising us to emulate these attributes of our Lord. We must be friendly and patient with everyone; these two characteristics are most welcome and beloved in the sight of the Lord. He was also saying that these two characteristics keep a person far away from Hell. Allah Almighty bestowed these two characteristics upon all the Prophets and Saints; with them one may attain to high degrees, without them, no one can be pleasing to the Lord. In this life, everyone must be friendly and patient, and every Prophet came to teach just this. The solution of all mankind's problems is to be found in patience and friendliness. He who is friendly to everyone will meet with friendliness.

Our Grandshaykh further stated that there is one characteristic which drags people to Hell — that is anger. Anger is a large gate to Hell through which everyone can fit, big or small, man or woman.

The Prophet said that anger and short-temperedness bring people to unbelief. There is a Prophetic tradition which says: "Both the murderer and the murdered shall enter the hellfire." When the Prophet was asked: "Why does the murder victim also go to hell?" his answer was: "Because he was angry, and like the other man, he had the intention to kill his adversary." No one can be angry without Satan entering his heart and running through his veins. The only exception to this is anger for the sake of Allah Almighty which is a thing so rarely found that it is hardly worth mentioning in this context. All the more so, since the people of our time are so prone to trying to justify their own anger as being "anger for the sake of God", which in reality it is not, despite their rationalizations. At the moment of anger Satan has control over the angry person. When a man is angry, no one can speak to him — he will not listen. If one reminds

him at such moments of Allah or the Prophet, he will reject and deny; his position is Kufr, unbelief, and he will heed no advice. Satan courses through his blood; that is why you can see the veins of an angry man swelling. Whenever you are angry you must look in a mirror: you will see how your face takes on the appearance of a wild animal. If a man looks in the mirror just then, he will say, “Astaghfirullah — pardon me, oh Allah.” When you see an angry man, you must know that Satan is riding on him. If you are only a little bit angry or annoyed, then Satan is running after you and is trying to straddle you. If you are really angry and have lost your temper, then Satan is already sitting firmly in the saddle. Satan needs to control someone. I said to him: “Why don’t you take donkeys, horses or camels if you need to ride?” “No,” he said, “I am only happy when I am riding on the Sons of Adam.” “How do you do that?” I asked. “I make them angry and then I jump on and ride them,” he answered.

Do you want to be Satan’s donkey? — No one wants to be Satan’s donkey. Don’t be angry, don’t lose your temper, or else you will be a donkey for Satan. If you don’t get angry you can ride on Satan. That is why our Lord advises us not to lose our tempers and not to get angry. “Oh My servants, be friendly and patient with My creatures, then I shall be pleased with you.” Allah Almighty also says: “Oh My servants, if you forgive people’s sins and make up with them, then I shall reward you.” Anger and ill-temper destroy the relationships between people. If you are not angry with someone who is angry at you, then you are repairing a relationship. A person who can control his anger may receive the pleasures that Allah has promised to the patient.

It is not so important to know a thousand Hadiths by heart; rather, to keep their meanings within ourselves through actions is the goal of our endeavour. This is an important lecture — see that you can act upon it.

* * *

TABLES FROM HEAVEN

My Grandshaykh gave an explanation concerning Allah's revelation to His Prophet: although the Prophet has departed from this world, his presence still lingers on Earth through his inheritors, the Saints. Every night, the Prophet holds a special assembly, and there are different gatherings for Awliya (Saints) of varying degrees of Sainthood. Every night, the spiritual personality of the Prophet is present with them at these gatherings. Allah Almighty teaches the Prophet, and gives him more and more of His blessing, so that the Prophet's Divine Knowledge is continually increasing. Just as Allah Almighty teaches His Prophet of His Knowledge, so the Prophet is always teaching the Awliya. Allah Almighty revealed to His Prophet that He blesses His obedient servants. That means, it is the Divine Will that man be obedient to his Lord, and as much as he is obedient, that much he will be beloved in the Divine Presence. Allah does not love intentionally disobedient and stubborn people. If Allah Almighty is satisfied with His servant's obedience, He loves to give him everything and to satisfy him in every way.

My Grandshaykh said that Allah Almighty addressed the Prophet as follows: "Oh Muhammad, if My servants are obedient and perform their worship sincerely, then I will not tire them with planting and ploughing, but I will send them tables of food from Heaven." He sent such a table down upon the Prophet Jesus Christ, Peace be Upon Him, and his disciples ate from it. This is not a difficult task for Allah Almighty, nor would it be any more trouble for Him to send down such a table spread with an infinite variety of foods to the Nation of Muhammad. You must know that there is

not only one such table in the Heavens. That one table mentioned in the Qur'an was but a sign to make you realize that with Allah there is unending provision. If you know how to ask, then it will be sent to you. Should you reply that such a gift was sent only in the time of Jesus Christ and never again after that, then you are accusing your Lord of being exigent and poor. In our own houses, we may have enough food stored up for ten meals; should Allah have only one meal for Jesus and his disciples, and no other?

When we are standing in worship before our Lord, He sends us sustenance from His Divine Presence. We must be obedient and keep to His service in piety and good actions — then everything will be prepared for us. If you are not thinking about this world, but only about His service, then He won't occupy your hearts with work for this world. An explanation of this point comes from our Grandshaykh, who relates it from the Holy Prophet, who receives it from Allah: "Oh My servants, come into My service, then I will send you everything you need, and you won't have to bend in back-breaking toil."

You have come here from distant countries; you have come for the sake of Allah and have left everything behind, seeking your Lord's pleasure — and your Lord will satisfy you in every respect. We are now eating of these provisions. Everyday, without ever tiring, He sends unto us from His Beneficence, and we are enjoying most delicious meals. It is no more than one spoonful from His Divine tables that we are eating, yet so many are partaking of it and are finding it sufficient. We do not even cook so very much, but for the honour of our Grandshaykh it is always enough and there is a blessing coming upon us. It is a miracle of our Grandshaykh: there may come any number of people — ten, fifty, one hundred, or more, it makes no difference — there will always be enough food. You are witnesses to this fact,

and everyone, from East to West, may come to test this.

What is the summary of this lesson? — Be an obedient servant of your Lord and He will take care of you here and in the hereafter. You must choose your way: if you are seeking contentment and ease, and looking to pass your life joyfully, then you must become an obedient servant of your Lord.

Every man must be an obedient servant, either of his Lord or of his ego, and he must choose either one to be his master. To be the servant of one's ego means to serve one's donkey. However, to be an obedient servant of our Lord is an honour for us. Whoever serves his ego gains only dishonour for himself. This is true for every single member of humankind; everyone alive on the Earth must hear this. If everyone were now to become obedient servants of their Lord, then all misery and calamity would disappear from the face of the Earth and all the World's problems would be solved.

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END OF PART TWO

~DAMASCUS LECTURES~

SPRING 1400 H. (1980 C.E.)

GLOSSARY *of*
ARABIC TERMS



BIOGRAPHICAL
SKETCHES

ABDAL (also BUDALA)

The “Substitutes” or “Changed Ones”; The forty hidden Saints of Damascus who hold high positions in the spiritual hierarchy. Sayyidina ‘Ali once warned his followers not to curse the people of Damascus, with whom they were at war, saying: “Don’t curse the people of Sham (Damascus and surrounding areas), for among them are the Abdal through whom Allah sustains you, bestows of His mercy upon you and makes the rains fall upon you.” They are referred to as “Substitutes” since, whenever one of them dies, Allah immediately substitutes him with another.

ABDUL QADIR AL-GILANI (470 — 561 AH)

Known as “The Rose of Baghdad”; he was born in Naif in the Gilan district of Persia, and was a descendant of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, his mother being descended from the Prophet’s grandson Husayn and his father from the Prophet’s grandson Hasan. The founder of the Qadiri Tariqat, he is one of the most renowned Sufis of all times, respected even by the outward scholars because of his great learning and piety. Allah Almighty bestowed upon him many miracles (Karamat). The most famous collection of his lectures, extant up until the present day, is: “THE REVELATIONS OF THE UNSEEN” (Futuh Al-Ghayb).

ABDULLAH-WAHHAB ASH-SHA’RANI (898 – 973 AH)

A great Sufi and scholar of Egypt, he is the author of numerous works, among them a compilation of the Fiqh of the four schools of Law (‘Mizan-i Sha’rani’), as well as treatises on Sufi Knowledge, one of which is entitled Red Sulfur. (Kibrit-al-Ahmar)

ABU BAKR AS-SIDDIQ (d. 12 AH)

First Khalifa of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and inheritor of the inner teaching transmitted to his heart in the Cave of Thawr where the Prophet and he were hiding from would-be assassins (the persecuting Quraysh). Allah caused a spider web to appear at the mouth of the cave in order to convince

the pursuers that no one could possibly be in it. The incident is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an.

ABU-YAZID AL-BISTAMI (186 – 260 AH)

Also known as Bayazid and Tayfur, was born in North-Eastern Persia, the grandson of a Zoroastrian. One of the most colourful figures in the history of the Sufis, there are many wonderful stories and sayings from his life which are mentioned in TADHKIRAT UL-AWLIYA of Farid ud-din Attar (Muslim Saints and Mystics — Translated by Arberry). He was an early Naqshbandi master and was famed for his many miracles and startling sayings.

ADAB

Good manners, the proper way of behaving; respecting people's feelings and knowing how to treat them as well as one's keeping respect towards Allah Almighty and having a correct attitude in your relationship to Him, are at the heart of the teaching of the Holy Prophet Muhammad — this whole area of knowledge and wisdom is referred to as "adab".

AD-DUNYA WA AHLUHU

This low world and its 'devotees'. The world's elusive charm and those people who are taken in by it so that nothing else is important to them. They would do anything just to increase the amount of its treasures they can hoard — they know no shame and will stop at nothing, just to secure their control not only over what is rightfully theirs, but also what belongs to others. Sayyidina 'Ali said: "This lower world is carrion, and those who are seeking to devour it are dogs," and, "The love of this world is the root of all evils."

ADHAN

The Call to Prayer read from the minaret of the Mosque five times every day. The call says: "Allah is the Greatest. I bear witness that there is no God other than the One True God (Allah). I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of

Allah. Come to the prayer. Come to true success. Allah is the Greatest. There is no God but Allah.”

AHL-AL-HAQQ

The People of Truth. Referring to those Saintly people are able to ascertain the absolute truth contained in any thing, being or statement; those who can “get to the heart the matter”, and are thus concerned with that essential truth rather than with any partial manifestation of the truth or any veil which covers it. The three levels of understanding are said to be: Shariah (Law), Tariqat (The Way) and Haqiqa (Absolute Truth).

AHLIYYA

Competence; Aptitude; Suitability; Fitness; Qualification – One’s pre-destined ability to do what he must do in life.

AKRAM UL-AKRAMEEN

The Most Generous of the Generous — referring to Allah Almighty.

ALI IBN ABI TAL1B (d. 40 AH)

Cousin of the Prophet and husband of the Prophet’s daughter Fatima. Fourth of the rightly-guided Khalifas. Inheritor of Islam’s inner teaching, and thus the first Shaykh in the succession of forty Sufi Tariqats. He was famous for his Saintliness, brilliant mind, ascetic lifestyle and skill, as well as fairness and strength in warfare.

ALLAH

The One True God for whom there is no partner nor any equal in the Heavens or the Earth. The Creator of all things who was never born, will never die and knows no such thing as fatigue or heedlessness. He is aware of all that happens in the Heavens and the Earth — even the movements of the tiniest insect in the darkest nights — He is with us wherever we go,

and nothing can be hidden from Him Almighty. He created everything just to worship Him and He bids His Creatures to follow those who have turned to Him with love (the Prophets and Saints) so that they may perfect their obedience and servitude to Him Alone. He is the Most Merciful of the Merciful and no one can know nor match the extent of that mercy and forbearance. He sent His beloved Muhammad to the World as a channel for that Divine Mercy, so that those who heed his call may be reprieved from the darkness of ignorance and its inherent suffering, and embark upon a way that will lead them to contentment and purity in this life and high degrees of closeness to their Lord in the hereafter.

AL-MAHDI

The rightly guided one. A man from the descendants of the Holy Prophet Muhammad who will appear at the end of time in order to fight the enemies of faith and prepare the way for the coming of Jesus Christ. Imam Al-Mahdi will be given miracles with which to accomplish his great mission, and he will rule the world for seven years. He will appear three months after the outbreak of the Great War, and one of his miracles will be, that when he pronounces the words ‘Allahu Akbar’ (God is the Greatest) thrice, all the technology of the war and the world will cease to function.

AN-NAFS UL-AMMARAH BIS-SU

The lower self which commands one to do evil. The Holy Qur’an says: “Verily the lower self is always commanding to evil.” The Holy Prophet said: “We have returned from the Lesser Holy War (that was fought on the battlefield) and now is the time for the Greater Holy War, that is the war against your greatest enemy — the lower self which lies between your two sides.” The self-accusing self. When a person follows his lusts under the absolute control of the Nafs ul-Ammara bis-su, he acts like a wild animal, but the innate faith in his human nature may make him feel disgust in himself for the evil actions he commits and the destruction he does to himself and others. When he feels such a “pang of conscience”, it means that his self-blaming self is stirring and making himself see and feel the shame in what he is doing. As a result of the awakening of this self, a struggle commences between it and

the lower self: either one follows the inspirations received from the self-blaming self and gradually conquers the lower self through following a religious way and asking Allah for forgiveness of one's sins, or else one tries to ignore the voice of conscience and stubbornly persists in following his lusts, and as a result, falls deeper into depravity, accompanied by despair, bitterness and cynicism.

‘AQIBA

End, consequence, after effect of one's actions.

ARHAM UR-RAHIMEEN

The Most Merciful of the merciful. Referring to Allah Almighty.

AWLIYA (sing. WALI)

Saint; Friend of Allah.

AYAT

Sign of Allah; Holy verse of the Holy Qur'an.

‘AYN-UL-YAQIN

The Eye of Certainty; The penetrating vision of the Awliya which enables them to see the Truth.

BARAKA

Blessing, benediction: abundant and continual good; prosperity, good fortune. A spiritual "emanation", an impalpable substance, flowing from Saintly people and hallowed places and objects; (tombs of Saints, places of pilgrimage).

BARZAKH

Interval, break; obstruction, partition, isthmus. The Holy Qur'an says about the dead: "And in front of them is a 'Barzakh' until the Day of Resurrection," and also: "And between them is a 'Barzakh' which they cannot overcome." The 'Barzakh' is the World in which the dead exist while awaiting their being called from the graves. According to Islamic beliefs, this period of time is not necessarily one of absence of consciousness, but rather a preview of what one will taste in the way of Divine reward or punishment later, and a place in which one's actions during one's lifetime are acutely felt (see lesson in this book entitled, "Reward and Punishment in the Grave and Beyond."). Prophets and Saints have not only consciousness during this time, but also are aware of the condition of the World, and may have contact with the living, especially their successors and those who follow their Ways. The Holy Prophet said that whosoever visits his tomb and greets him, he is aware of that greeting and indeed returns it, and also that whoever visits his tomb will receive his intercession on the Judgement Day. The Holy Qur'an says: "Do not think that those who are killed in the Way of Allah are dead; nay, they are alive and from their Lord receive sustenance: happy with what their Lord has bestowed upon them and taking pleasure from those who have not yet joined them (still in earthly life), because (they know that) those who are following behind them have no cause to fear nor to be sad." This verse is taken to refer to not only those who died in Holy Wars on the battlefield, but also those who killed their egos in what the Prophet called "The Greater Holy War", or the War against the lower self.

DAJJAL

The Anti-Christ – may Allah protect us from falling victim to his deception. He will appear at the end of time, after the Great War, in the time of Sayyidina Al-Mahdi, who will not however have the power to kill Dajjal. That power Allah Almighty has given to Jesus Christ, who will at that time descend from Heaven and go out to fight and kill Dajjal in a place to the north of Damascus. Dajjal will deceive people with miracles Allah gives to him for the purpose of leading the misguided even further astray and those in whose hearts is disease — Dajjal will water the seed of evil with his charisma and misleading miracles (Istidraj). He will claim to be Muslim but

will lead people to everything that Islam opposes. According to the Holy Prophet, Dajjal will not be able to enter the Holy City of Madinah, and since he can't enter, 70,000 hypocrites (Munafiqin) will leave Madinah in order to join him. Dajjal will be of huge stature and will have one defective eye. The Prophet also said that before the appearance of the Anti-Christ there will appear numerous smaller Dajjals to mislead people.

DERVISH

A mature follower of the Sufi Way, whose heart is firmly fixed in the remembrance of Allah, and whom "neither buying nor selling can divert from his inner resolve." (Qur'an). In the traditional world, dervishes have often been seen as living outwardly simply, frequently as religious wanderers, or in part-time spiritual seclusion (Khalwa) — unambitious in worldly affairs. These are but outward descriptions, which may vary with the requirements of the times. It is his inner state which makes a man a dervish, not his clothes, or manner of conduct.

DHAT (plural — DHAWAT)

Being; essence of one's being; spiritual soul. The immutable and pure spiritual self which comes from Allah and always remains in His Divine Presence, and is never touched by the bad actions of the lower self.

DU'A

A form of supplication distinct from the 'Salat' or ritual prayer; during the du'a one may ask Allah for anything and in any language.

FARD

Obligatory religious duty such as prayer five times daily and fasting in Ramadan, paying the poor-due (Zakat) etc.

FATIMA

The daughter of the Holy Prophet, and wife of Sayyidina ‘Ali, the Prophet’s cousin. She was famed for her piety and beloved dearly by both the Prophet and ‘Ali. The Prophet once said that while many men in history had attained spiritual perfection, only four women had attained those heights: Asiya, the wife of Pharaoh (who secretly believed in Moses); Maryam (Mary) the mother of Jesus Christ; Khadijah, the first wife of Muhammad; and Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad. She died six months after the Prophet’s death and, before he died, her father gave her the good tidings that she was soon to join him in heavenly bliss.

FIQH

Understanding; Insight; Comprehension; Refers to the total understanding of the Islamic Religion, particularly in relation to its laws and their applications to everyday life. Since Islam provides guidance for every aspect of human life, fiqh deals not only with the correct way to worship, but also with how one may do business, give charity, marry, divorce, eat and even sleep in accordance with the commands and recommendations of Allah (in the Qur’an) and the Prophet (in Hadith) — transforming all those activities, in practical effect, into acts of worship.

Every Sunni Muslim follows one of the four great Imams of the Science of Fiqh, who all lived between two and four generations after the lifetime of the Prophet, and who attained high degrees and special distinction among members of the Nation by performing the great service “translating” the vast amount of information contained in the Qur’an and Hadith into easily understandable guidelines of which are comprised their respective “Schools of Law”. This codifying was a task that required the lifelong devotion of these exceptionally sincere and gifted Imams, as they had to investigate most carefully a huge body of sometime seemingly contradicting information about the Prophet’s life and practices, and deal with situations peculiar to their time through drawing analogies with somewhat similar cases in the lifetime of the Prophet (Qiyas). The result of their efforts are four distinct methods that differ slightly on certain matters, but are in

total harmony as regards the basic beliefs and practices — as such things were spelled out far too clearly by the Qur'an and the Prophet for there to be any confusion or disagreement about them by any rightly-guided Imam. Thus, we can see that, despite the minor differences each of the Imams had the utmost respect for the others and considered those who had come before him chronologically as being his teachers.

These four Imams: Imam Malik, Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Shafi and Imam Ahmad Ibn-Hanbal, were Mujtahids, which means a person endowed with enough religious knowledge combined with the sincere practice of that knowledge to make that person capable of arriving at the truth of the matter, even when faced with difficult and touchy questions that baffled religious authorities of lesser stature. They attained this state, it should be stressed, not only through studying but by truly humbling themselves and conquering their lower selves; that sincerity and integrity which made them so great also got them into trouble with the rulers of their times, as most of them ended up being tortured and imprisoned by rulers who wanted them to misinterpret Gods Law to accord with their vain desires — which they flatly refused to do.

One may perhaps ask why Allah left some areas of religion open to difference of opinion rather than spelling out every little thing. The Holy Prophet said regarding this point: "The differences among my Nation are a Mercy." Thus, the four Schools (Madhahib) can be understood like one highway reaching to the same goal but having four lanes — a four-lane highway — and those four lanes make it possible for each to move at his own speed, as Allah says: "And Allah wants to make it (i.e. His religion) easy for you." (This point was explained to us by Mawlana Shaykh Nazim and has been previously published in Mercy Oceans Book Two).

FITNA

Discord, strife, affliction.

FITRA

Natural disposition, innate character; refers to man's being

born with innate faith and in total surrender to his Creator.

HADITH

Prophetic tradition. Some Hadith were written down during the lifetime of the Prophet, but the Prophet himself did not encourage it strongly in that time for fear that Hadith literature would become confused with the Qur'an. After his lifetime, some Hadith were written down and some transmitted by word of mouth. Beginning with the generation of the tabiieen, (those who never met the Prophet but did meet some of his surviving companions), those Hadiths began to be collected in volumes, classified according to subject and verified in authenticity through examination of the reliability of the characters and memories of those who transmitted them.

HADITH QUDSI

A Prophetic Tradition in which the Prophet quotes Allah, or, in other words, where Allah speaks in the first person on the tongue of the Prophet. These sayings are, however, distinct from the Qur'an.

HAFEEZ

A person who keeps the Qur'an in his memory and actions.

HALAL

Permissible, lawful, legitimate. All actions which fall within the limits of the Shariah, Divine Law.

HAQIQI IMAN

True faith based upon realization of the truth — a level above the normal level of imitative faith. The three signs of the presence of Haqiqi Iman are: 1) The ability to hear all things, animate and inanimate, praising their Creator; 2) Knowing the wisdom behind all things in existence, their purposes and

positions; 3) Being able to contact the souls of all Prophets and Saints in the Barzakh World.

HARAM

Religiously forbidden, unlawful, prohibited either because of sacredness or harmfulness. All actions which fall outside the limits of Shariah.

HASAN Al-BASRI (21 – 110 AH)

Born in Madinah, the son of a slave who served the Prophet's scribe Zaid bin Thabit. He was raised in Basra and became known for his uncompromising piety and outspoken condemnation of worldliness in high places. He was a brilliant orator and many of his speeches have been preserved.

HAWA

Vain desires, fancies, inclinations; distractions and idle or vain thoughts which keep one from reality and worship.

HIMMAH

Energy, vigour, ambition, resolution, determination, zeal, aspiration.

IBRAHIM BIN ADHAM (d. 165 AH)

Abu Ishaq Ibrahim Bin Adham was born in Balkh (Central Asia) of Arab descent. He was born into a royal family and had become the King of Balkh when the events described in this book took place. He repented of worldliness and became a wandering dervish. He lived a life of complete asceticism so that he became known as the King of the Ascetics. He always worked for his sustenance by performing tasks of manual labour and was also known to feed many companions from the earnings of those simple but strenuous tasks. Ibrahim avoided the praise of people and tried to evade the notoriety he had attained by dressing as a servant or as a madman.

Once when he was coming to Makkah for pilgrimage the Shaykhs of Makkah went out to meet him, having heard of his great piety and renunciation. Ibrahim had dressed up as a servant and was walking at the front of the Caravan together with the slaves and servants. When the Shaykhs came and asked him where Ibrahim Bin Adham was to be found, since they had heard that he would be in that Caravan, he replied: "What in the world do you want with that heretic?" upon which the Shaykhs set upon him and beat him up. Later in his life, when asked about times in his life when he had felt true satisfaction, he pointed out this incident as having been such an occasion.

IHSAN

The level of true goodness which develops from faith. The Holy Prophet said that Ihsan means to worship as if you were seeing God in front of you, for even if you don't see Him, He sees you.

IKHLAS

True sincerity; purity of intention. A very high state of devotion.

‘ILM-UL-LADDUNI

Knowledge from the Divine Presence. Knowledge which is inspired into the hearts of the Saints and enables them to know some things which are hidden from the sight of other people.

‘ILM-UL-YAQIN

The Knowledge of Certainty – a station of knowledge which takes place in the hearts of developed Sufis; when a thing is known directly and with an inexplicable quality of certainty.

IMAM UT-TARIQAT

The particular Shaykh in the chain of succession of any given Tariqat after whom the Tariqat is named and who played the major part in expounding the particular branch of knowledge and methods of the line of teaching from which he descended — each Tariqat has its beginning with the Holy Prophet, but each represents a different aspect of the teaching which can benefit different kinds of people.

IMAN

Belief, faith. A level beyond simply surrendering to the Law of Islam, it is a stage at which the faith has entered the heart of a person. The specific pillars of Iman are six: 1) Belief in Allah, 2) Belief in the Prophets of Allah, 3) Belief in the Angels, 4) Belief in the Holy Books which Allah sent to mankind through His Prophets, 5) Belief in Heaven and Hell, 6) Belief that Allah has predestined everything that occurs in this World, regardless of whether it appears to us to be good or bad.

IRSHAD

Spiritual guidance, direction and instruction.

‘ISA IBN MARYAM

The Holy Prophet Jesus Christ Son of Mary, Peace be Upon Him. He will return at the end of time to kill the Anti-Christ and to establish the Heavenly Kingdom on Earth.

‘ISHA

The night-time prayer which may be performed at any time between nightfall and the first crack of dawn — the preferred time being during the first half of the night.

ISLAM

Surrender to Allah; the first level of faith at which one surrenders outwardly to the orders of Allah — carrying out that which He demands of you and leaving that which He forbids. The five pillars of Islam are: 1) Declaring that there is no god save the One True God, Allah Almighty, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; 2) To pray the ritual prayer (Salat) facing Makkah five times a day; 3) To fast the whole month of Ramadan, abstaining from all food, drink and carnal pleasures from the first crack of dawn until sunset; 4) To give one-fortieth of one's wealth and prescribed portions of herds and harvests annually to the Muslim poor; 5) To make the pilgrimage to Makkah in the time of Haj at least once in a lifetime, provided one possesses the necessary material means.

JAHILIYYA

The time of ignorance; referring to the pre-Islamic era during which the Arabs lived in the darkness of ignorance, worshipping idols and following their lusts and superstitions as there was a relative lack of knowledge of revealed religions such as the religion of the Jews or Christians. Although the followers of these religions were to be found in the Arabian Peninsula, they were concentrated in a few towns and were but small communities in comparison to the much larger numbers of idol worshipping folk.

JIBRIL

The Angel Gabriel; the Angel who is responsible for bringing down revelations to Allah's Prophets and Messengers.

JIHAD

Holy war. It is the duty of all male able-bodied Muslims to answer the call of the Khalifa of the Muslims to go to war against anyone threatening the peace of the Muslims, preventing Muslims from practicing their religion or harming any people (of any religion) under the protection of the Muslim State. It is not permitted in Islam to fight against people who

want to make peace with the Muslims, nor to be the aggressor in any case.

JIHAD UL-AKBAR

The Greater Holy War which is fought against one's own lower self and is referred to by the Holy Prophet as the Greater Holy War because of its being of utmost importance for every Muslim. Without the believer gaining the upper hand over his lower self, he cannot hope to perfect his religion nor to be of any use to the community of believers; instead, he will deter people from the true way by his unconquered selfishness and tarnish the name of religion through the wrong actions he performs in the very name of faith — the implication is that Muslims should not even consider fighting against any other enemies of Islam until they conquer their greatest enemy, the greatest unbeliever — the ego.

JINN

Genie. The Qur'an is addressed to both mankind and jinn. The Jinn are made of smokeless fire, man from Earth and the Angels from light. As in the case of mankind, there are both believers and unbelievers found among the Jinn. Their bodies being subtler than man's, they cannot be seen normally, however, they have been known to affect the lives of men in various ways.

KAABA

The Holy House of Allah in Makkah. Built in the shape of a cube, the Ka'bah was first erected by the Prophet Abraham and his son Ishmael when Abraham was ordered to leave his wife Hajar and her son in that desolate valley. Allah provided them miraculously with water from the Zam-zam well and established them in the land. The Lord promised to bless the seed of Ishmael, and the fruit of that blessing was the sending of the Prophet Muhammad, who was from the seed of Ishmael. After the Ka'bah's original consecration to the One True God by Abraham and his son, the people fell into idol worship for many generations until the time of Muhammad, when the Ka'bah was cleaned of idols and the worship of the

One True God was re-established.

All Muslims face the direction of the Ka'bah in their prayers — not because they assume God to be living in it, as it has been supposed by malevolent or ignorant critics — rather that it be the central focal point towards which all Muslims, worldwide, turn their faces, in converging unity. When visiting the Ka'bah, Muslims perform the rite of circumambulation, in emulation of the Angels circumambulation of the Throne of Allah in the Heavens.

KAFIR (plural. KUFFAAR)

Whosoever has come into contact with the true religion represented in its pure form by a Prophet or one by of their inheritors, and then consciously rejects that truth and persists in stubborn unbelief is said to be a Kafir.

KHALID AL-BAGHDADI (1190 — 1242 AH)

Born in Baghdad of a Kurdish family originally descended from the Khalifa 'Uthman. He was a learned man in Islam who longed to find a true Murshid and left Baghdad for Damascus where he met his first Shaykh, Shaykh Mustafa of the Qadiri Tariqat. He continued on to Madinah and Makkah. From there he was directed by the Awliya to go on to India where he would find his true Master. After he returned to Baghdad, he met some murids of the Naqshbandi Shaykh 'Abdullah Ad-Dehlawi, and was inspired to travel there to meet him. After staying some months with his Shaykh there, he was sent back to Baghdad to teach the way of the Tariqat. He later moved to Damascus where he trained many followers before he died of the plague. His tomb is located in the Jabal Akrad section of Jabal Qasiyun in Damascus. His famous work was Shams-Ush-Shumus (The Sun of Suns).

KHALWA

Spiritual seclusion — the “forty days in the hole”. The intensive, often 40-day long period of training in the Sufi Tariqat during which the lower self is deprived of even the

permitted enjoyments of normal Muslim life. During this time he must fight his ego with great courage and determination, as because of the removal of normal pleasures it raises its head in rebellion and gives the seeker intense difficulties. The Shaykh watches closely over the murid during this time and defines the exact activities which he must perform, for although all Khalwa involves fasting, absolute seclusion, increased prayer, remembrance and reduced sleep, there are differences dictated by the particular needs of the murid which are attended to by specific orders of the Shaykh. The first Khalwa is a training Khalwa, and only when the Shaykh sees that the murid is really ready to subdue his ego will he put him into a second and final Khalwa.

KHAWWAS (sing. KHASS)

The elect; the people who have the inborn capacity (Ahliyya) for the Most distinguished Naqshbandi Tariqat.

KHIDMAH

Service. The service which a humble murid should perform for his Shaykh, for all the followers of his Shaykh, for all Sons of Adam and all creatures of Allah.

KUFR

Unbelief; rejection of truth. SEE “KAFIR”

LAYLATUL MI'RAJ

The night during which the Holy Prophet Muhammad, Peace be Upon Him, was taken by the Messenger Angel Gabriel on the back of the mystical steed Burraq, from The Holy Mosque of Makkah to the Holy Rock of Jerusalem and up from there to the Seven Heavens, in each of which he met and conversed with one of the Holy Prophets of Allah who came before him to this Earth (Adam, Noah, David, Moses, Abraham and Jesus). After reaching the top of the Seven Heavens he was taken to the utmost limit of Gabriel's domain, then continued to the Divine Presence where he came within two bow-lengths of the

Majestic and Most Exalted Creator of the Heavens and Earth.

MA'ANAWI 'ULUM

Spiritual Knowledges, Esoteric Science.

MAHDI

See AL-MAHDI

MALAKOOT

The Kingdom of Heaven; the Angelic Realms.

MANSUR AL-HALLAJ (244 — 309 AH)

Hallaj was born in Persia and then travelled widely throughout the Muslim World, boldly preaching of Union with God. He was finally arrested on the charge of heresy when he declared: "I am The Absolute Truth," (Ana-l-Haqq). He was condemned to death, mutilated and crucified in public. Before he was executed fellow Sufis implored him to declare that, "He is the Truth." His reply was: "Yes. He is All. You say that He is lost. On the contrary, it is Hallaj who is lost. The Ocean does not vanish nor grow less." The famous Sufi Junayd was told of these words of Hallaj with the suggestion that the words had an esoteric meaning which proved that his meaning was other than the blasphemy which it seemed. Junayd replied, "Let him be killed, this is not the time for esoteric meanings." His fellow Sufis never denied the reality of his mystical experience of Union, but only criticized him for revealing in public what amounted to a "private communion with the Beloved". Junayd also maintained that Hallaj's experience of Unity was only an intermediate stage of mystical experience, and not the ultimate goal.

MEVLANA KHALID

See KHALID AL-BAGHDADI

MIRAJ

See LAYLATUL MIRAJ

MUFTI

Official expounder of Islamic Law, a high level religious jurist licensed to pass religious edicts and verdicts.

MUHAMMAD

Muhammad, Son of ‘Abdullah, son of ‘Abdul Muttalib — The Messenger of Allah Almighty who was sent as a mercy unto the Worlds; the last of the Prophets and their leader — he for who’s sake Allah Almighty created the World, may Peace and the Blessings of Allah be upon him. He was born in the fifty-first year before Hijra (560 A.D.) and his father died before Muhammad was ever born. He grew up under the care of his uncle Abu Talib and worked as a shepherd and later as a trader. At the age of twenty-five he married a widow named Khadija who was fifteen years his older and remained married solely to her until her death twenty-six years later.

Muhammad never worshipped the idols that the ignorant Arabs had set up in and around the Holy House in Makkah which had been built and dedicated to the worship of the One True God by the Prophet Abraham and his son Ishmael. Rather, Muhammad was one of the detached seekers of truth who were known as ‘Hunafa’, who were searching for the purity of the religion of Abraham, rejecting what they could recognize as obvious perversions in not only the cults of the pagan Arabs who were predominant in Arabia, but also in the much tampered with doctrines of the Jews and Christians. At the age of forty, Muhammad was in spiritual seclusion in the Cave of Hira when he was visited by the Angel Gabriel who ordered him to read. Muhammad replied that he did not know how to read or write, as he was unlettered; but the Angel squeezed his chest and repeated the order thrice: “Read, in the name of your Lord Who created; Created man from a clot of blood, Read, and your Lord is the Most Generous, for He is the One who taught man by the pen, taught man that which he did not know.” With these words the revelation of

the Qur'an commenced, and for the following twenty-three years the Prophet continued to receive revelation through the Angel; the total of these revelations is contained in the Holy Qur'an which contains enough guidance, wisdom and instruction to lead the Muhammadan nation from that time on till the Last Day.

Thirteen years after the beginning of revelation, the Holy Prophet migrated from Makkah to Madinah along with his followers, when the pagan Arabs of Makkah threatened and tried to kill him. This event is called the Hijra, and it marks the beginning of the Islamic Calendar. After living for ten years in Madinah, a time in which all the Qur'anic verses dictating Islamic Law and social norms were revealed, and Islam had been established in an entire community as a living way of life, the Prophet passed on to the hands of his Creator. He passed away on the same date as he was born — the twelfth of the lunar month Rabi' al-Awwal in the year 10 AH.

MUHASABA

Allah's calling one to account for one's actions on the Last Day; or the practice of calling one's self to account in this life before the next.

MUHYUDDIN

See SHEIKH MUHYUDDIN IBN ABABI

MURID

A follower who desires to learn the Sufi Way from a Shaykh (Murshid); One who submits himself to the care and the orders of a Sufi Shaykh.

MURSHID

Guide, advisor, instructor. One who leads another to the right way. (Rushd). A Sufi Shaykh.

MUSLIM

A person who has surrendered to Allah. See ISLAM.

NAFS

Self, ego. Three levels of Nafs are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an: 1) The Nafs-ul-Ammarah bis-Suu: the lower self that prompts one to evil and gratification of animal lust; 2) The Nafs-ul-Lawwamah: the awakening conscience, the self-accusing self; 3) The Nafs-ul-Mutma'inna: the tranquil self at peace, the God-realized self.

NAQSHBANDIYYA

See SHAH NAQSHBAND

NASIHAT

Sincere advice. The Holy Prophet said: "Religion consists of sincere advice."

NASRUDDIN HODJA

A legendary figure in Sufi history about whom there exist volumes upon volumes of comical teaching stories with a message. He is known as Mulla Nasruddin in the Persian speaking world and as Joha among the Arabs. He is supposedly buried in Aksehir, Turkey.

‘UMAR IBN-UL-KHATTAB (d. 23 AH)

The second of the Rightly Guided Khalifas of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. ‘Umar at first was an inveterate enemy of Islam and was on his way to kill the Prophet, but when he entered the Prophet's chamber, belief in Islam and the Prophet's mission came into his heart and he left a Muslim and a dedicated follower of Muhammad. ‘Umar was known for his indefatigable enthusiasm in trying to serve the Prophet, for his quick temper, unswerving sense of justice and absolute

integrity. It was under the Khalifate of ‘Umar, which began in the twelfth year after Hijra following the death of the first Khalifa Abu Bakr, that Islam spread throughout the Middle East and Central Asia. He was stabbed in the back while at prayer by a Christian slave, and upon his deathbed thanked God for not letting him die at the hands of a fellow Muslim.

‘UTHMAN IBN AFFAN (d. 35 AH)

The third of the Rightly Guided Khalifas. ‘Uthman was one of the very first people in Makkah to embrace Islam and suffered persecution at the hands of his relatives for it. He first married the Prophet’s daughter Ruqayya, and when the persecution of the Makkans became insufferable he was ordered by the Prophet to migrate to Abyssinia. Upon his return he made the Hijra to Madinah, where Ruqayya died. The Prophet then gave him his second daughter Umm-Kulthum in marriage. ‘Uthman had become very rich as a cloth merchant and used his money constantly in the way of Allah in order to help the Muslims — he bought the only pure well of Madinah from a Jew who wouldn’t let the Muslims use it, purchased a thousand camels for the Muslim army and financed the expansion of the Holy Mosque in Madinah. Upon the death of ‘Umar, ‘Uthman was selected as Khalifa. He served for twelve years until he was assassinated over a political dispute. During his reign the Religion of Islam spread through North Africa and other regions.

QADA WA QADR

All that is decreed and ordained by Allah; pre-destination. Belief in these principles is part of the basic pillars of Faith. The principle of the free choice of individual action exists alongside pre-destination in Islamic theology.

QUR’AN

The Holy Scripture of Islam. The Holy Qur’an was revealed unto the Prophet Muhammad over a period of twenty-three years. It is a revelation from the Lord of the Worlds imparted through the revealing Angel Gabriel to the heart of Muhammad, Peace and Blessings be upon him, and passed on

by the Prophet, by Divine Command, to the whole of Mankind and Jinn. The Holy Qur'an was sent as the Seal of Scriptures, following in the footsteps of the Torah, Psalms and Gospel in bringing light unto the people of this world of darkness. In it is affirmed the Prophethood of all the earlier Prophets, and major incidents from their lives are summarized therein; the Qur'an brings to light the crimes of tampering with scripture which both the Jews and Christians had been guilty of and sets straight all that they had misunderstood and twisted in their doctrines. The Qur'an sets down a Divinely Inspired Law and Way of Life which is valid and applicable until the end of time — showing mankind in clear terms the way that they may attain felicity both here and hereafter — that is, if they hold to its tenets. The Qur'an contains not only Law and summaries of the lives of earlier Prophets, but also mystical parables, descriptions of eternal bliss for the obedient and warnings of torment for the stubborn and evildoing tyrants of this world. The Qur'an is the eternal speech of Allah (Kalam-Allah ul-Azali) and has been transmitted to mankind in the Arabic language. Because of the mystical power of its sounds — the sound of the Qur'an has been known to melt the hearts of the most stubborn unbelievers who understood not a word of Arabic — it cannot really be translated into any other language; a translation of its meaning may be useful indeed, but it cannot stand in the place of the original, neither in prayer nor spiritual benefit.

RAKAT

A bow followed by two prostrations in the ritual prayer (Salat)

RASULALLAH

Messenger of Allah; usually referring to the Prophet Muhammad but may be applied to any of Allah's Messengers. All Messengers were Prophets but not all Prophets were Messengers; the Messengers being the elect of the Prophets and the ones who were sent with a definite verbal or written message and Law to a People. There have been 124,000 Prophets sent to the Earth, and of them 313 were also Messengers. Virtually all of the most famous Prophets, such as Moses, Abraham, Jesus, David and Solomon were also Messengers. (Peace and blessings be upon them all as upon

our Prophet Muhammad.)

R1DWAN ALLAH UL-AKBAR

Allah's greatest pleasure — that being His pleasure in a servant who has given Allah's desires complete preference over his own, and thus comes to Allah totally purified of the pollution of the ego's desires.

SAHABA

The companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may Allah be pleased with them all. They numbered 124,000 and represented all the different types of personalities that would be found throughout the era of the Nation of Muhammad. The Sahaba who embraced Islam in Makkah and later migrated to Madinah where called the Muhajireen ("those who have made Hijra, migration"). The Ansar (Helpers) were those residents of Madinah who embraced Islam and welcomed the Prophet and his fellow Muhajireen to Madinah, preferring them, in many cases, to themselves, and giving them most of what they possessed. Later there were many other Sahaba who embraced Islam as it spread throughout the Arabian Peninsula, including the residents of Makkah who had fought against the Prophet but later embraced Islam en masse when the Muslim Army conquered Makkah in the year six AH.

SAHIB UZ-ZAMAN

Master of the Era. See AL-MAHDI.

SAKARAT UL-MAWT

The pangs of death, agony.

SAKHRAT UL-AMANA

The rock of trusts; referring to the Black Stone which is embedded in the eastern corner of the Holy House in Makkah (Ka'bah). It is a mystical stone which descended from Heaven

together with Adam and Eve. Its qualities are unlike the qualities of any other rock on Earth. It records the names of all those Muslims who greet it by kissing it or raising their hands and saying: “In the Name of Allah. Allah is Greatest, To Allah belongs all Praise.”

SAYYIDINA ABU BAKR

See ABU BAKR AS-SIDD1Q

SAYYIDINA ‘ALI

See ‘ALI IBN ABI TALIB

SAYYIDINA AL-MAHDI

See AL-MAHDI

SAYYIDINA MUHAMMAD

See MUHAMMAD

SAYYIDINA ‘UMAR

See ‘UMAR IBN AL-KHATTAB

SAYYIDINA ‘UTHMAN

See ‘UTHMAN IBN AFFAN

SHAH NAQSHBAND (717 – 791 AH)

Born in Qasr-i-Arifan, near Bukhara, where he is buried. The Imam of the Naqshbandiyya Tariqat, he was the inheritor of the spiritual way called the Path of the Masters (Khwajagan). His name signifies the concept of “engraving the indescribable reality on the heart.” Shah Naqshband studied under Muhammad Baba as-Samasi who ultimately appointed him

his Khalifa. He continued his studies under another Khalifa of Baba Sammasi, Sayyid Amir Kulal, and yet under another, ‘Arif al-Dhakkirani, before taking the reins of the Tariqat himself. He then spent seven years as a courtier, seven years looking after animals and seven in road-building. Among his followers, he introduced the silent dhikr, rather than the types of loud and lively dhikr-rituals that were pre-dominant among the Sufis of his time. He preferred the silent dhikr as it was taught by the earlier master ‘Abdul-Khaliq Al-Ghujdawani (d. 575 AH). Consequently, the Naqshbandiyya became known as the ‘Way of the Silent Dervishes’ and most of their rituals and practices are performed silently and individually. The Naqshbandiyya is the only Tariqat which came down through Abu Bakr rather than ‘Ali and only Naqshbandi Shaykhs have the authority to initiate students into all other Tariqat branches; that is why it is called “Tariqat-ul-Aliyya” (the most distinguished of Tariqat-Orders).

SHARI’AH

The canon law of Islam, the totality of Allah’s commandments relating to the activities of man; the indispensable basis for religious life. Shari’ah and Haqiqa (the mystical reality) form a correlated pair, giving to man the possibility of unfolding his potential to the highest degree.

SHAYKH MUHYUDDIN IBN AL-‘ARABI (560 — 638 AH)

Shaykh Muhyuddin Ibn-‘Arabi was born in Murcia in (South-eastern Spain) and was descended from a distinguished and learned Arab family. From a very early age he showed distinct signs of spiritual authority which was even recognized and respected by those Shaykhs from whom he took instruction in the Sufi Way. From an early age he also had numerous mystical experiences in which the inner teaching was revealed to him and clarified — he often met the immortal Guide Khidr. So great was his spiritual stature that he became known and is known up unto this day as “The Greatest Shaykh” (Shaykh Ul-Akbar), and his metaphysical treatises became so famous that he was even known in the Christian World, where he was called “Doctor Maximus”. Perhaps the greatest reason for his receiving this title is that he was the first man to commit to writing a vast ocean of doctrine and learning which had

previously been confined to oral transmission from shaykh to murid and spoken of in veiled allusions rather than being spelled out so openly and meticulously. In his works Shaykh Muhyuddin expounds on subjects ranging from metaphysical doctrines to the esoteric significance of ritual ablution (Wudu) and describes mystical states and stations in detail.

Shaykh Muhyuddin (lit. The Reviver of the Religion) travelled extensively throughout his life and was treated by some with the great respect he deserved and by others with contempt and rancour — indeed the religious authorities often contemplated executing him, but he was always saved by Divine favour and by the intercession of influential friends who both explained themselves and encouraged him to explain some of the more startling statements he had made and which seemed to be heretical in the eyes of the Muslim theologians. He was finally killed in Damascus, after having declared, “The god you worship is beneath my feet.” For the people, this was an incomprehensible blasphemy, and they killed him on the spot. Later it was discovered, that under the very place he had been standing, there lay buried two huge cauldrons of gold. (See ‘Mercy Oceans, Book Two’) He is buried in Damascus, at the foot of Mount Qasiyun.

SHEIKH SHARAFUDDIN (1290 — 1358 AH)

The Shaykh of Grandshaykh ‘Abdullah Ad-Daghestani. He was born in Daghistan and later migrated to Turkey with a community of Daghestanis. He is buried in Giiney Koy near Yalovu/Bursa.

SHIRK

Polytheism; ascribing partners unto Allah Almighty. “Shirk” is the greatest sin that one may commit, especially after having gained access to the truth of the Unity of God. The Prophet warned his followers that Shirk exists in many and variegated forms, and that Satan is always trying to fool people into committing this great sin without their even knowing it. He warned that what he feared most for his Nation was not that they would go back to the most blatant and obvious form of Shirk, the form that existed among the

pagan Arabs and involved the worship of idols, observance of ignorant superstitions which had no basis in any revelation whatsoever, and the belief in a Greek-style Pantheon of Gods; but what he feared was that they would fall into the “Lesser Shirk”, or all those forms of shirk which may be hidden from the obvious regard; for example, the worship of money, the worship of lusts, the worship of reputation etc. The worship of reputation could lead one to actually perform seemingly pious acts, not for Allah’s pleasure nor in the hope of fulfilling His commands, but only in order to maintain one’s reputation among people — praying for the camera, so to speak; this is called in the Qur’an and in the Prophet’s Hadith “Riya An-Nas” or “Being seen by people.” As many steps as one takes in the right direction Satan is there to turn them into shirk — the greatest sin.

SULTAN AL-ARIFIN

King of the Gnostics or Knowers. Title given to ABU YAZID AL-BISTAMI (See entry under that name).

SULTAN AL-AWLIYA

King of the Saints. Title given to SHAYKH ABDULLAH AD-DAGHISTANI (See biographical sketch at beginning of book)

SULTAN AZ-ZAHIDEEN

King of the Ascetics. Title given to IBRAHIM BIN ADHAM (See entry under that name).

SUNNAH

The practice and way of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, which encompasses everything from his manners, pronouncements, advice, rulings and even ways relating to eating and going to the toilet, and supplications which accompany those acts.

SURAT AL-FATIHA

The Opening Surah (Chapter) of the Qur'an; it is read in every prayer and on most all occasions. Its meaning is:

“In the Name of Allah, The All-Beneficent, The All-Merciful. Praised be Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. The All-Beneficent, The All-Merciful. The King of the Day of Judgement. Thee alone do we worship and from Thee alone do we ask succour. Guide us to the Straight Path, the Path of those with whom You are pleased, not the Path of those who have deserved Your anger, nor that of those who have gone astray.”

TABLIGH

Conveyance, transmission, delivery. Calling people to Islam.

TAFSIR

Exegesis, Explanation of the Holy Qur'an. The many Tafasir of the Holy Qur'an which have been written in the past, aim to clarify the meaning of the text, to help the reader derive more understanding from a given verse. Sometimes it is through grammatical explanations, at other times the events that surrounded the revelation of the verse are mentioned; or Hadiths of the Prophet about the verse or relating to it are cited to shed light upon its meaning, as well as cross-references to other verses on the subject. When relevant, certain passages from the Bible or Torah are quoted. Tafsir deals with mostly obvious and outward meanings obtained in this manner, while 'Ta'wil' deals with inner meanings and interpretations.

TAJALLI

Spiritual emanations and manifestations.

TAQLEED

Imitation, following what one has learned from one's parents;

following one of the four Schools of Law

TARIQAT

Sufi Path. All Tariqats originate in the heart of the Prophet Muhammad, Peace be Upon Him, and consist of the inner teachings of Islam which he passed on to ‘Ali and Abu Bakr and they, in turn, to their successors. When the Holy Prophet had learned something from the Angel Gabriel or through inspiration, it was also indicated to him to which category that knowledge belonged: Whether it was knowledge meant for him and for him alone, knowledge which he had permission to pass along to the elect of his disciples (this category is the knowledge of the Tariqats), or knowledge which he could announce openly to all the World.

TASBIH

Glorification of Allah. This word refers not only to those praises made to Allah by pious worshipping people, but also to the exalting and worship of Allah by all animals, plants and inanimate objects.

TAUBAH

Repentance. The Prophet said that the person who repents of a sin is like someone who has never sinned.

TOOBA

Greatest happiness and blessedness.

ULU AL-HIMMAH

High Aspiration. The Prophet says: “High aspiration is a sign of faith.”

‘ULAMA

Religious scholars; learned people.

UMMAH

The Nation of any given Prophet, i.e. those for which he is responsible and for whom he will intercede. Now is the time for which the Prophet Muhammad is responsible — there are no more Nations of Moses or Jesus in this time. The Ummah is divided into those who have been called (Ummat ud-Daawah) and those who have answered the call (Ummat ul-Ijaba).

WALAYAT (also WILAYAT)

Sainthood. The state of being a friend of God. The word Wilayat, which means a “district of territory” is from the same root, and this points to the fact that the Awliya (Saints) have always guarded over areas apportioned to them by higher authority (Allah and His Prophet), and are responsible for attending to the spiritual needs of the inhabitants of the areas over which they have been made responsible.

WA’IZH (plural Wu’azha)

Those who are responsible for giving spiritual counsel and exhortations.

WUDU

Ritual Ablution. Before praying every Muslim must perform ablution by making the intention to perform ablution for the sake of Allah, then washing his hands, mouth, nostrils, face, arms, head, ears, back of neck and feet. Although it is not obligatory, it is considered to be very good practice to remain always in a state of ritual purity. Ablution must be repeated after going to the toilet, passing wind, getting angry or sexually excited, and after sleep.

YAUM UL-QIYAMAH

The Day of Resurrection. The Day upon which the bones of all of the Sons of Adam will be called from their graves, clothed anew with flesh and skin, and called to account for the actions they performed in their lives.

ZAWIYA

Literally a corner, angle. A small mosque or prayer room more specifically applied to a building or group of buildings used as a meeting place of Sufis, a small Tekkia.

THE GOLDEN CHAIN OF TRANSMISSION OF THE NAQSHBANDI KHWAJAGAN MASTERS

1. The Holy Prophet Muhammad Mustafa, Peace be Upon Him.
2. Abu Bakr as-Siddiq
3. Salman al-Farsi
4. Imam Qasim bin Muhammad bin Abu Bakr as-Siddiq
5. Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq
6. Abu Yazid al-Bustami
7. Abul Hasan al-Kharqani
8. Abu 'Ali al-Farmadi
9. Yusuf al-Hamadani
10. Abul-'Abbas (Khidr, Peace be Upon Him)
11. 'Abdul Khaliq al-Ghujduwani
12. 'Arif Righwari
13. Mahmud al-Faghnawi
14. 'Ali Ramitani
15. Muhammad Baba as-Samasi
16. Sayyid Amir Kulal
17. Khwaja Shah Muhammad Bahauddin
Naqshband al-Uwaysi al-Bukhari
18. 'Alauddin Muhammad al-Attar
19. Ya'qub al-Charkhy
20. Ubaydullah al-Ahrar as-Samarqandi
21. Muhammad az-Zahid

22. Darwish Muhammad al-Bukhari
23. Khwaja al-Emkeneki as-Samarqandi
24. Muhammad al-Baqibillah as-Samarqandi
25. Mujaddid al-Alf ath-Thani Imam Rabbani
Ahmad Faruq as-Sirhindi
26. Urwat ul-Wuthqa Muhammad Ma'sum
ar-Rabbani
27. Haji Sayfuddin ar-Rabbani
28. Nur Muhammad al-Badwani
29. Habibullah Mirza Jan-i-Janan al-Mazhar
30. Ghulam 'Ali 'Abdullah ad-Dehlawi
31. Muhammad Khalid al-Baghdadi ash-Shami
32. Shaykh Ismail an-Narani
33. Khas Muhammad Shirwani
34. Shaykh Muhammad Yaraghi
35. Sayyid Jamaluddin al-Ghumuqi al-Husayni
36. Abu Ahmad as-Sughuri
37. Abu Muhammad al-Madani
38. Sayyid Sharafuddin ad-Daghestani
39. Sultan al-Awliya 'Abdullah ad-Daghestani
40. Sultan al-Awliya Shaykh Muhammad Nazim
'Adil al-Qubrusi al-Haqqani
41. Sultan al-Awliya Mawlana Shaykh Muhammad
'Adil ar-Rabbani

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